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ABSTRACT

This Israeli journal for teachers of English provides news reports and articles on aspects of teaching English in Israel. The brief news items address such topics as language examination formats, teacher certification examinations, teacher education degree programs, conferences, and new instructional materials. The articles cover the teaching of translation skills in secondary school, class projects, testing of oral proficiency, English curriculum for gifted children, using drama to teach English, the use of popular songs in English teaching, and the development of a multi-media television series for teaching English in secondary schools. Letters to the editor and Hebrew synopses of the journal articles are included.
(RW)

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Teachers of English are invited to write short articles, reports and letters to the editor. Please write to "English Teachers' Journal", English Inspectorate, Ministry of Education and Culture, Jerusalem, 91 911.

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All previous issues are now out of print.

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ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL (Israel)

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INFORMATION FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

New "BAGRUT" Format — External Examination in Language Skills Only (from Summer 1983)

(For schools and for "External" examinees: for Internal Examinations in "Reading Literary Texts" (schools only; not for "External" examinees) — see JOURNAL 26, January 1982; for Internal examinations for Technical and Agricultural schools — a special notice will be sent to schools and will be published in the next issue of the JOURNAL.)

The following examination papers will be available:

1. *THREE points: "regular" question paper*

- a) Oral test (identical in level to the examinations for FOUR and FIVE points).
- b) Reading Comprehension test A ("multiple-choice" and "guided open-ended" answers, in English) — identical in form and level with the examinations for FOUR and FIVE points.
- c) Reading Comprehension test B ("open-ended" answers in Hebrew or Arabic) — identical in form and level with the examination for FOUR points.
- d) Listening Comprehension test (identical in form and level with the examination for FOUR and FIVE points).
- e) Language exercises — "cloze" and "interrogative dialogue" (but easier passages than for the FOUR and FIVE points examinations).

Note:

- (i) There is NO internal examination in Reading Literary and/or Technical texts at the 3-points level, but reading these texts is part of the curriculum for these pupils.
- (ii) The THREE-point "Regular" question-paper stresses proficiency in the Receptive Language Skills (note in particular that there will be TWO passages testing Reading Comprehension — identical in form and level with the FOUR points examination — whereas till now the THREE and FOUR points examinations contained ONE passage only). This THREE point question-paper will also contain some language exercises and also a number of "guided open-ended" answers, all of which are intended more for the Productive Language Skills.

2. *THREE points: "special" question-paper for new immigrant pupils*

This examination is meant for new immigrant pupils coming from non-

English-speaking countries, who are also being examined for their Bagrut in another language at a higher level.

- a) Reading Comprehension test A ("multiple-choice" and "guided open-ended" answers in English) — an easier passage than in the "regular" three-point examination.
- b) Reading Comprehension test B ("open-ended" answers in easy Hebrew) — an easier passage than in the "regular" three-point examination.
- c) Language Exercises — identical with the exercises set for the "regular" three-point examination.

Note: There are NO oral or listening comprehension components in this question-paper and no internal examination in Reading Literary and/or Technical texts.

3. *FOUR points*

- a) Oral test (identical in level with the examination for FIVE points).
- b) Reading Comprehension test A ("multiple-choice" and "guided open-ended" answers in English) — identical in form and level with the FIVE point examination.
- c) Reading Comprehension test B ("open-ended" answers in Hebrew or Arabic).
- d) Language Exercises — "cloze" and "interrogative dialogue" (identical in form and level with the FIVE point examination, but fewer items in the "cloze" test).
- e) Listening Comprehension test (identical in form and level with the FIVE point examination).

Note:

- (i) This question-paper stresses proficiency in the Receptive Language Skills (note in particular that there will be TWO passages testing Reading Comprehension, whereas till now this paper contained one Reading Comprehension passage only). However, this question-paper will place greater stress than in the THREE points paper on Productive Language Skills, by means of the communicative language exercises, which are identical with those of the FIVE points examination (in addition to the oral test and the "guided open-ended" answers in the Reading Comprehension, which are also "productive").
- (ii) This question-paper is accompanied by an internal examination in "Reading Literary Texts" (חוכנית מצומצמת), in the form of short-essay answers. In Technical and Agricultural schools being examined in Reading Technical texts, the internal examination may be in the form of multiple-choice answers and/or open-ended answers in Hebrew or Arabic.

4. *FIVE points*

- a) Oral test.
- b) Reading Comprehension test ("multiple-choice" and "guided open-ended" answers in English).
- c) Essay (Composition) — choice of subjects, length 300 words.
- d) Listening comprehension test.
- e) Language exercises
 - (i) "cloze" (more items than in the FOUR points paper)
 - (ii) "interrogative dialogue"
 - (iii) paraphrased sentences.
i.e. Rewrite the following sentences using the word(s) given :
e.g. He asked : "Am I late ?"
whether
Answer : He asked whether he was late.
e.g. They frighten us.
afraid
Answer : We are afraid of them.
- (i) This question-paper tests both Receptive and Productive Language Skills at an advanced and sophisticated level.
- (ii) This question-paper is accompanied by an internal examination in "Reading Literary Texts" (תוכנית מורחבת), in the form of short-essay answers.

5. *SIX points*

This question-paper includes the FIVE points paper (both the external Language Skills paper and the accompanying internal paper in Reading Literary texts), and in addition sets *either* a "personal project" in language or literature *or* an internal question-paper on a school-suggested programme. This question-paper is meant for native speakers of English or other pupils who excel in English to the extent that their control of the language is near-native.

Pupils sitting for this examination must first sit for the FIVE point paper at the end of Grade 11 and obtain a final mark of 9 at least.

The school must first obtain the agreement of the Chief Inspector for English to the candidates, the suggested programme for the 6th point and the question-paper itself. This 6th point is marked by an external examiner.

6. "Bridging Examinations" (בחינות השלמה)

Question-papers to raise the number of points from THREE ("regular" paper only) to FOUR points and from FOUR to FIVE points will also be set.

7. Reading and Listening Comprehension

All these external question-papers, from 3 points ("regular" paper) to 6 points, have the same texts and the same questions in Reading Comprehension (text A) and Listening Comprehension.

8. Internal Examinations

- a. The marks for the internal examinations in Reading texts (literary and/or technical) will be entered on the Bagrut certificate together with the marks for the subjects which are not examined for "Bagrut". The mark for this internal examination is *not* added to or included within the mark for the above external language examinations and is *not* part of the Bagrut points which determine eligibility (וכאות) for a Bagrut certificate.
- b. "External" examinees (אקסטערניס) and "Repeat examination" examinees (מסנה) are examined in the above language examinations only; they are *not* examined in any internal examination in Reading Literary and/or Technical Texts.

Examination Requirements for Unqualified Teachers in Secondary Schools -- Methods of Teaching English in Secondary Schools

See 3/מב' חורר מנכ"ל מ/3 November 1981 for full particulars regarding qualifying examinations for *practising* secondary school teachers not possessing a permanent teacher's licence. These teachers must first receive an official letter from the Ministry of Education Personnel Department informing them of the examinations they are to take in order to become qualified; they may then become qualified either by means of regular studies and examinations leading to a Teaching Diploma at a university School of Education or at the College for Training Academics for Teaching (Rehov Borochoy 3, Givatayim) or by means of External examinations held by the In-Service Training Department of the Ministry of Education (Rehov Tshernichovsky 17, Tel Aviv 63291, Tel.: 03-654275).

The following bibliography is required reading for teachers preparing themselves for the External examination in "Methods of Teaching English in Secondary Schools":

1. Elite Olshain and Frieda Dubin: "Facilitating Language Learning"
2. Wilga Rivers: "Teaching Foreign Language Skills" OR "A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English"
3. Estelle Friedman: "English by Television and Foreign Language Learning"
4. Ministry of Education and Culture, Israel: "English Curriculum for Schools"
5. Raphael Gefen (ed.): "Teaching the Pedagogical Grammar of English"
6. Raphael Gefen (ed.): "The Two-Point ("Gemer") Examination in English"

7. Teacher's Guides to the textbooks in the "English for Speakers of Hebrew (ESH)" series and the "English by Television" series
8. Articles in "ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL (ISRAEL)", issues 18-27, especially articles dealing with socially-disadvantaged pupils, curriculum changes, teaching language skills, testing.
9. E. A. Levenston: "English for Israelis"
10. M. Dagut and G. Sheintuch: "A Short Guide to the English Verb System"
11. J. B. Heaton: "Writing English Language Tests".

Optional additional reading is as follows:

12. M. Finocchiaro: "English as a Foreign Language — from Theory to Practice"
13. R. Lado: "Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach"
14. I. Morris: "The Art of Teaching English as a Living Language"
15. K. Chastain: "The Development of Modern Language Skills — Theory to Practice"
16. J. Oller: "Language Tests at School"
17. R. Lado: "Language Testing"
18. Fromkin and Rodman: "An Introduction to Language"
19. Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens: "The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching"

Teachers who do not possess a matriculation certificate from an English-speaking country must also be examined in English Language Proficiency (no required texts; the examination consists of reading comprehension passages, language exercises, composition and an oral test); secondary school teachers must obtain a pass mark of 75%.

MA in TEFL/TESOL, Tel-Aviv University School of Education

The School of Education at Tel-Aviv University is offering an MA programme designed for teachers of English who wish to further their expertise in the areas of a) research related to teaching, b) teacher-training and teacher-counselling, c) curriculum design and materials development, d) policy-making at the English departmental level at schools and at institutions of higher learning. The programme is interdepartmental and combines courses in Applied Linguistics with courses at the School of Education. The programme comprises 40 weekly semester hours (not including pre-requisites such as Linguistics for participants without previous training in this discipline) and a thesis which can be related to the participant's field of interest. The average length of studies is two years at somewhat less than 20 hours per week. This programme will be of particular interest to teachers (both primary and secondary, with the necessary academic background and teacher's credentials) shortly to take a Sabbatical year.

E.T.A.I. Conference : Theme — Socially-Disadvantaged Learners

The Third Annual Conference of the English Teachers' Association of Israel took place at the Gymnasia Herzlia, Tel Aviv, on 27 December 1981. After Opening Remarks by the ETAI Chairperson, Dr. Elite Olshtain, plenum papers were delivered by Dr. Yitzhak Kashti (School of Education, Tel Aviv University) on "ארגון ההוראה ומיקום התלמידים בכיתה : דוגמאות מחיי יום-יום בבית הספר בעירית פיתוח"; by Professor Dov Spolsky (English Department, Bar-Ilan University) on "Sociolinguistic Aspects of Language Disadvantage"; by Mr. Raphael Gefen (English Inspectorate, Ministry of Education and Culture) on "Trying to Reach the Least-Able Learner"; by Dr. Elite Olshtein (School of Education, Tel Aviv University) on "Attitudes and Motivation: Some Aspects of a Study Done in Israel"; and by Mr. Ephraim Weintraub (Ein Karem Agricultural School and School of Education, Hebrew University of Jerusalem) on "Some Observations from the Field". During the lunch-time break, Jean Vermel (Bet Berl Teachers' College) led the sing-song. After the Annual Business Meeting, a number of WORKSHOPS discussed Primary School classes, the Use of Drama, Teaching Aids, Working with Small Groups, Teaching Literature in the Upper Division classes and other subjects dealing with the general Conference theme of socially-disadvantaged learners.

Enquiries about membership of the Association and about national and local Branch activities should be addressed to Mr. Ephraim Weintraub, National Secretary ETAL, Mevo Hapartizanim 304/16, Hagiva Hatsorfatit, Jerusalem.

New Publication : The Deeds of the Pioneers in Eretz Israel 1840-1940

This book by Adam Ackerman, published by the "Good Times" Publishing Company, can be used as an Extensive Reader from Grade 10 ; it is particularly appropriate for new immigrant pupils from English-speaking countries, from Grades 7-8. The original Hebrew version of this book is used in junior grades in many schools : a bilingual edition is also available (meant for Jewish schools abroad).

New Publication : ORT Publications — COMPUTERS

"English for Students of Computers, Advanced Level Part I" has now been added to the ORT Vocational English Series. Texts for this new booklet have been selected by Shlomo Sadeh, who also prepared the exercises. This is an experimental internal edition ; schools wishing to use this material on an experimental basis should apply to Mr. Shlomo Lipstein, ORT.

New Publication for Teachers: DISCUSSIONS THAT WORK

This handbook for teachers, written by Penny Ur, teacher of English at Har Vegai school, Kibbutz Dafna (see her article "Efficiency in Language Teaching" in this issue), and published by Cambridge University Press, is aimed at developing oral fluency in the upper grades of secondary school, both for advanced and weaker pupils. The book is divided into two parts: *General Principles* and *Practical Examples*. In the first part, the author outlines the factors which create lively, student-centred discussion activities ("discussion" is used in the sense of any free verbal exchange). Setting a task to give the activity direction and the pupils motivation is regarded as the central element in a successful discussion. She also deals with the practicalities of the organization of a discussion activity from presentation to conclusion. The second part fills out this theoretical framework with many practical ideas based on the author's classroom experience and arranged into three main areas: *Brainstorming Activities*, *Organizing Activities* and *Compound Activities*.

New Publication: CLOZE IN CLASS (Pergamon Press)

This workbook of exercises in developing reading comprehension, written by Alan Moller of the British Council and Valerie Whiteson of Bar-Ilan University, contains 30 graded passages in which words have been deleted (Cloze procedure). The deleted words comprise grammatical and lexical items which often cause difficulties (not meant specifically for Israeli students). The passages have been chosen from a wide range of newspapers and magazine articles, advertisements, brochures and letters which were originally published in Britain, the U.S.A. and New Zealand, and for the most part are reproduced in their original form. Follow-up discussions, compositions and language exercises are suggested in an accompanying Teacher's booklet, which also contains a key to the answers.

New Textbooks for Grades 10-12: COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH

These three books (Book 1 by the late Joe Lison, Books 2 and 3 by Shlomo Kernerman) cover the Ministry of Education syllabus for these grades in all four skills. Each book is accompanied by a Teacher's Book and a Listening Comprehension cassette. The series is published by Kernerman Publishing, Tel Aviv. Glossaries in the page margins are in Hebrew and Arabic. Each unit has five sections: Reading passages (followed by comprehension exercises, vocabulary exercises and discussion exercises some of which lend themselves to group-work and role-playing, others to writing activities), a Language section (linked contextually to the Reading passages and containing new grammar material, reviews of material taught in previous grades or earlier in the book),

a Listening Comprehension section (the text being in the Teacher's Book), a Guided Writing section (linked contextually or thematically to the unit in general or to the Listening Comprehension section), and a Reading Comprehension set of activities ("unseens", dictionary practice, training in reading strategies etc.). Books 2 and 3 in the series (meant for Grades 11 and 12) devote more space to Reading; the materials are unsimplified with two Reading Activities per unit and a Reading Comprehension passage. The Listening Comprehension section has both an Activity text and a Comprehension text. Grammar is presented as one of the Writing activities; in addition to a page of formal grammar exercises (review) in each unit, grammar is practised indirectly throughout the books, in the form of Cloze exercises, word practice, asking questions and dialogue completion. There is also a section of "Additional Activities" — topics for oral and written activities, and more reading texts.

New Publication for Teachers: TEACHING THE PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH, revised and edited by Raphael Gefen

This handbook for teachers and guide to the English Curriculum for Israel schools is available from *שרות ההפצה של פירסומי הממשלה, רח' דוד אלעזר 29, הקריה, תל-אביב 67673* price 53 shekels, including postage. New teachers (especially new immigrant teachers from English-speaking countries, whose academic training in their countries of origin was not in Applied Linguistics or Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and students will find it particularly useful.

The book outlines the role of teaching grammar in the curriculum and argues for teaching grammar as a meaningful, contextualized activity, integrated with the teaching of the language skills (and in so doing, clarifies the difference between a "pedagogical" and a "scientific" grammar). The book also contains a detailed linguistic analysis of the various Grammar Structures (all taught in the form of meaningful sentence patterns not as abstract rules) taught at the different levels of schooling in Israel. Wherever necessary, didactic advice is given and potential difficulties due to mother-tongue interference are indicated. Teacher-trainers and teacher-counsellors are especially called upon to make sure their "charges" buy a copy of this book (together with the Curriculum itself); student-teachers should be required to use this book as part of their reading and study for papers they will be writing on the teaching of English grammar or on the linguistic analysis of various English syntactic structures from the pedagogical point of view.

N.B. Please note the following erratum: page 9, line 17 — delete entire line "subtle differences... to" and replace by: "not involve the systematic translation of sentences from the one language to".

Repeat Notice : The Herzog-Toynbee Debate

The famous debate between Dr. Yaakov Herzog and Professor Arnold Toynbee on Jewish history and nationhood and the State of Israel has been published as a Reader for advanced classes in Grades 11 and 12 (and may be chosen by schools as equivalent to two non-fiction prose items for the internal Bagrut examination in Reading Literary Texts). The Reader has been published by the Curriculum Centre of the Ministry of Education and Culture and is available from 'Ma'alot' Publishers Tel Aviv (address as for the "English Curriculum" notice in this issue). The Reader also contains an Introduction and a glossary of difficult words. An accompanying Teacher's Guide, written by Dr. Michael Hed, is also available and is essential to the proper treatment of the material. The actual debate was recorded at the time (1961) and is available on cassette at every Pedagogical Centre of the Ministry. The cassette may also be ordered from the publishers, CBS Records, Tel Aviv. The price of the pupil's booklet is 7.05 shekels per copy for orders of 12 copies or more, ordered direct from the publishers, 8.96 shekels if purchased as a single copy in bookshops; the price of the Teacher's Guide is 3.36 shekels per copy for orders of 10 copies or more ordered direct from the publishers, 4.26 shekels if purchased as a single copy in bookshops. These prices are valid for March 1982 and include V.A.T. but not postage.

New Materials in Preparation

We regret that the "Festivals Booklet" mentioned in our last issue has not yet been printed due to budgetary difficulties. It is hoped that the booklet will appear during the school-year 1982-1983. Other materials in preparation are: Making Israel Beautiful (materials for Grades 7 and 10), more booklets in the series for Secretarial classes by Tali Glass and Naava Horowitz (IN THE OFFICE, and DIRECTIONS have already been published by the Institute for Teaching Aids), and booklets for Hotel Workers. A SONG-BOOK (teacher's handbook only) will also be published shortly.

The English Curriculum for Schools

The Curriculum (Grades 5-12) is available from 'Ma'alot' publishers, price at the time of going to print 10.00 shekels (not including postage). Every teacher should have a copy of the Curriculum, and Teacher-Trainers and Teacher-Counsellors should all ensure that their 'charges' have a copy. The Curriculum is an indispensable part of the programme for studies for Teacher-Training (Pre-Service and In-Service). The address of the publishers is: Carlebach 29,

Tel Aviv (Tel.: 03-284191). Individual copies of the Curriculum can be obtained from the branch of the publishers at Rehov Borochoy 20, Tel Aviv. Schools may order copies by means of the form sent to them from the Curriculum Centre, Ministry of Education and Culture. Price for bulk orders (10 copies or more, direct from the publishers) 7.84 shekels per copy (not including postage).

NEWSPAPERS FOR USE IN SCHOOLS

STUDENT POST / HEY, THERE!

"Student Post" and "Hey, There!" are *The Jerusalem Post* youth magazines.

Student Post is intended for good tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. *Hey, There!* is intended for both regular Intermediate Division classes and older, weaker pupils.

These two lively and thoughtful magazines are written by professional journalists and English teachers. The editorial staff also works closely with an advisory board of senior teachers.

Both magazines are edited by Susan Bellos Minkowich. They come out nine times a year.

For further information please write to *Student Post* or *Hey, There!*, The Jerusalem Post, P.O.B. 81, Jerusalem 91000 or call 02-528181.

GOOD TIMES

P.O. Box 3576, Jerusalem, Tel.: 02-525353

Publishers of the special newspapers in simplified English, *Good Times*, *Just For You*, *ABC Times*. These three newspapers will appear as usual from September in the school-year 1982/3:

GOOD TIMES for Grades 7, 8, 9

JUST FOR YOU for Grades 6, weaker 7

ABC TIMES for Grade 5, weaker 6, good Grade 4.

With each issue of **GOOD TIMES** and **JUST FOR YOU** there is a free Teacher's Guide containing suggestions for the effective use of the material. The newspapers appear in nine monthly issues over the school year (September-June). A final price had yet to be set for the new school year at the time of going to press, but schools will have received all the relevant information, samples and order forms in good time.

DISCUSSION PAPER :

INTRODUCING THE SKILL OF TRANSLATION AS ONE OF THE SKILLS TAUGHT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL (GRADES 11-12) AND TESTED IN THE BAGRUT EXAMINATION

by *Raphael Gefen*

The underlying principle of the English curriculum in Israeli schools is the fostering of English as a means of international communication ; in other words, the Foreign Language is taught as a skill-subject to teach the proficiency skills of READING COMPREHENSION, LISTENING COMPREHENSION, SPEAKING and WRITING, with the methodology being a combination of the audio-lingual and the cognitive approaches stressing meaningfulness at every level of instruction and stage of learning.

Within this over-all framework, the role of translation is an issue which has been discussed for many years. Fewer teachers today than in the past hold the doctrinaire and dogmatic "Direct Method" position which forbids any translation whatsoever, but there are still many who are nevertheless extremely reluctant to use the mother-tongue of the pupils, however minimally. Indeed, the "Direct Method", as the opponent of and successor to the "Grammar-Translation" method, rejected both cardinal principles of "Grammar-Translation", i.e. it was against the stress on rules of grammar unconnected with "situations" (tending to favour instead a "functional grammar" coming out of a text and not in any graded and systematic way) and it was likewise totally opposed to translation, on the grounds that the foreign language was to be learnt "directly" and "naturally" from the situation. Where teachers use translation, they tend to do so apologetically and in a somewhat furtive manner, still influenced by the theory if not the practice of the "Direct Method". This rejection of translation, therefore, has now become traditional ("the long despised technique of translation as a teaching and as a testing device" — John Oller: "Language Tests at School").

Proponents of the "Audio-Lingual" and "Cognitive" methods do not take such a rigid stand against translation, although they too seem to be somewhat wary of it. Audio-Lingual advocates are influenced by Skinnerian Behaviourist psychology and believe that learning takes place in the Stimulus-Response-Reinforcement chain, so that if we wish a learner to know (i.e. make correct responses) in English, the stimulus and reinforcement should also be in the foreign language. The attitude of "Cognitive Code" proponents is not clear, as very little has been formulated as to what constitutes a "cognitive" approach, but it can be assumed that this "rational-mental" approach would not be averse to translation.

The English Curriculum for Israeli Schools accords a possible role to translation in its advocacy of the "MODIFIED AUDIO-LINGUAL APPROACH", whereby translation could be part of the *presentation* of a lexical or grammatical item. Thus, a new word or grammatical form might be demonstrated in English (using "demonstrate" in its widest sense to include role-acting, doing, drawing), explained in English, compared with other forms or items in English — and then, as a check to make sure all pupils have understood, a translation is elicited from the pupils (or given by the teacher, if elicitation does not succeed). The Curriculum states (page 78): "Systematic translation is not recommended. In order to provide as natural an environment for foreign language learning as possible, the use of the mother tongue should be kept to a minimum. A textbook may give a one-time gloss of a new item, or a teacher may fear a possible misunderstanding or inexact comprehension and so give a one-time translation if other means fail or as a check to make sure the new item has been mastered. The use of the mother tongue should therefore be secondary and not constitute a regular element in the *presentation* of new material. Under no circumstances should translation be included in the practising and drilling of the subject matter."

This is a radical difference from the "Translation Approach" whereby the new material was initially presented in translation and then drilled by translation to and from the mother tongue at all stages of learning. Such a practice often results in most of the lesson being conducted in the pupils' mother tongue so that they never reach a stage of instant expression and direct comprehension in English. Systematic translation methods (i.e. "systematic" as against "incidental") will in the end hold the pupils back, if they have been trained and drilled always to translate back and forth. "The didactic dangers in the widespread use of the mother tongue far outweigh any immediate aesthetic or semantic benefit" (English Curriculum for Israeli Schools, page 77).

Translation as a Skill

The Curriculum goes on to state (p. 78): "In the Upper Division (i.e. Grades 10-12), there will probably be more need and scope for incidental translation from English to Hebrew (e.g. for abstract lexical items). Teachers should always bear in mind that translation is an art in itself and a specific skill, especially at the linguistic and literary level of the subject-matter studied in these upper grades".

Thus, translation is a distinct skill (*when dealing with more than the incidental translation of the word or phrase*) and therefore requires specific training. SHOULD WE ENGAGE IN TRAINING FOR THIS SPECIFIC SKILL IN THE UPPER GRADES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL (under no circumstances in Grades 5-10)? As a practical skill, there is much to be said in its favour:

graduates of our schools will very often have to translate a letter, instructions or other text into Hebrew or Arabic, and if this is considered to be an aspect of their *communicative proficiency* in the language it should certainly be taught, precisely because the translation of such longer passages involves lexical, grammatical and cultural difficulties not usually encountered when translating words or phrases. And if it is considered a proficiency skill and part of the focus on communication in our curriculum, it should also be tested in the Bagrut examination.

This translation test should be from English not into English, and only certain agreed points in the passage should be given a mark (i.e. the central meaning-laden points): the percentage for the translation test in the examination as a whole should not exceed 10%, in order to place it in its proper perspective. The passage would not be very difficult and there would be no call for the use of a bilingual dictionary.

Some Arguments in Favour of Translation

The central issue is therefore whether translating should be taught, whether pupils should be trained in these distinct skills involved in translating. In my opinion, there are a number of powerful arguments in its favour. As mentioned above, graduates of our schools will often be required to translate a letter or short text into Hebrew/Arabic. True, their present training in language proficiency obviously enables them to give a general gist of the contents, but possibly a more exact translation is required.

Secondly, there is a well-known face validity to a translation exercise or test — public opinion certainly expects a language learner to be able to translate from the foreign language into the mother-tongue. There are of course learners who excel at the foreign language (as well as many “co-ordinate bilinguals”) who find it very difficult to translate (“code-switching”) precisely because they are so proficient in the foreign language, but this “difficulty” can be overcome through training and through ensuring that the passage for translation will not be too idiomatic or culturally-biased. In the terminology of bilingualism, we would seek to produce “compound” rather than “co-ordinate” bilinguals. We often find, moreover, that outstanding pupils often do not write or speak (i.e. productive skills) as well as they should precisely because they “seek perfection”; the same difficulty would be encountered in their efforts to translate, but it is a difficulty to be overcome, not an insurmountable obstacle.

Thirdly, translation is a pragmatic-integrative language exercise involving different but directed language skills; as such, it accords with current thinking regarding language tests, which favours pragmatic-integrative tests (e.g. dictation, cloze) in contradistinction to discrete-point tests (e.g. separate grammar exercises)

or integrative tests (e.g. free compositions). John Oller ("Language Tests at School") quotes research to argue that if translation is used in ways that approximate its normal application in real-life contexts, it can provide valuable information about language proficiency. He gives, in his book, the following examples of pragmatic tests: cloze, dictation, combination of cloze and dictation, oral cloze tasks, dictation with interfering noise, paraphrase recognition, question-answering, oral interview, essay writing (guided), narration and translation (elicited).

Fourthly, perhaps through some translation-practice pupils might even be able to develop some insight into language as such precisely through the direct confrontation between the mother tongue and the foreign language; perhaps we might even have a breakthrough here to the third principle of the English Curriculum for Israeli Schools ("Aims and Objectives"). The first principle of the curriculum is communication, the second principle is the relevance of English to the educational process in Israel in general, and the third principle is *to encourage "an interest in and a feeling for language as such"* (i.e. not for a specific language) "...In this way, pupils will acquire a degree of insight into the nature and significance of language and also more insight into their mother tongue...".

Conclusion and Implications

Translation is therefore to be seen as a distinct skill to be taught and tested; the other skills which are NOT taught, drilled or tested through translation remain READING COMPREHENSION, LISTENING COMPREHENSION, SPEAKING and WRITING. These other skills would continue to be taught (taking into account the provisos about incidental translation mentioned above) and tested in English in order to get the pupils to express themselves in English directly and to comprehend English straight from the page or from the speaker. Being able to translate a passage from English is a separate additional skill; it is not part of the methodology of teaching the Reading-Listening-Speaking-Writing skills of English and is not the purpose of teaching these other skills.

I would see four practical consequences if translation is to be adopted in teaching and testing:

- 1) publication of a collection of suitable translation passages, drawn up by experts in translation, together with a pedagogical apparatus of suggestions, exercises and explanations;
- 2) in-service courses for practising teachers on the subject of translation in general and translation into Hebrew or Arabic in particular (secondary school teachers only);

- 3) students training to become teachers of English in secondary schools would be obliged to take courses in translation as part of their academic and pedagogical preparation for teaching;
- 4) teachers in the Upper Grades (Grades 11-12) and Bagrut examiners must be highly proficient in both Hebrew and English.

I would welcome comments on these suggestions for including translation as part of the curriculum (as a separate additional skill) and part of the Bagrut examination (10%).

The above paper is offered as a basis for discussion: teachers are invited to comment on these suggestions; we print below some comments on a pre-publication version of the paper.

From Professor Bernard Spolsky, Department of English, Bar-Ilan University:

"...your paper on translation makes a good case for teaching translation as a skill, distinguishing this clearly from the older use of translation as a teaching or testing method. Once this is clarified, your arguments for the value of teaching translation as a situationally and socially useful language skill follow. I am therefore in full agreement with your proposal.

In developing a pedagogical approach, I would suggest that strong emphasis be given to the social and situational contextualization of the task. Translation then would be taught (and tested) in a defined context of the sort you refer to, e.g. "Your friend has bought a new watch, but the instructions are in English. He doesn't know English at all and wants you to translate them for him."

This contextualized approach suggests a possibility for an introduction of the skill into the syllabus at an earlier stage, where the students might have some work on translating or interpreting orally conversations with tourists or visitors, etc., or orally translating letters from abroad. If there were such an earlier introduction, one would presumably want to discourage the too early introduction of the written skill. Oral translation and interpretation could presumably be tested in the same way and at the same times as other spoken skills.

The four consequences you conclude with seem completely reasonable to me. I would only suggest emphasizing even there the sociolinguistic context of translation; the high school programme would not be teaching translation as a general art or skill, but translation for communicative functions of the kind that the Israeli sociolinguistic situation requires.

To conclude, I like the idea..."

From Pnina Rosenblith, Boyer School, Jerusalem

"It seems to me that even the most devout Direct Methodists never really eliminated translation completely from the teaching process. I have been in the

field for over three decades and have had the experience of being swung with the pendulum to both extremes. Furthermore, having been trained in the bilingual tradition, I find it natural to conceive of language with a background awareness of mother-tongue significance.

During my student-teacher days at the Reali School in Haifa, my tutor, the late Mr. Diengott — proponent of the Diengott-Bentwich translation method — used to say (indeed, a very long time ago): "Young lady, our students will never learn to think in English, so let's teach them how to translate their thoughts correctly." Yet even in the early 1950's there was no consensus on this point, and the early 1950's was long before TV and the Beatles. Eventually, however, the reorientation toward the direct method condemned translation. Today, however, with exposure to English constantly increasing, one feels there is less danger in resorting occasionally to translation.

Translation into the mother-tongue has always granted the learner the final confidence that he has really mastered a certain grammatical item or an abstract lexical concept. The use of Hebrew naturally comes as the final stage of confirmation that the new concept has really been comprehended. If, after explaining in English a new word of abstract meaning and illustrating its use in a new English context, the teacher finally gets the Hebrew equivalent from the class, both teacher and students are comfortably assured that there is no vagueness. This in itself is extremely desirable. Similarly, the teacher presents a new tense (e.g. the present perfect when the time-marker is not expressed), explains its meaning, illustrates the time situation in which it is used, and gets the class to produce situations requiring that tense. Only then does the teacher confront the student with the NON-EXISTENCE of the tense in Hebrew:

אתמול ראיתי את ההצגה. (מתי? אתמול. זמן הפעולה ידוע.)
— ראיתי את ההצגה (מתי? לא ידוע, לא מענין. העיקר הוא שעכשיו אינני רוצה לבוא איתך
לתאטרון.)

Such a procedure would enhance perception of one of the functions of the 'Perfect' in English. With a slightly more sophisticated class, the scope of finer distinctions of time rendered possible through the various aspects of tense in English can be conveyed fairly easily, thus encouraging "an interest in and a feeling for language as such".

But so far I have dealt with the methodological relevance of translation, of which teachers are probably well aware. A further (and indeed no lesser) value lies in the students' almost invariable enjoyment derived from translation into the mother-tongue. Coping with problems of bilingualism stimulates the student's appreciation of language; solving those problems refines his awareness. The ultimate attempt is gratifying to both student and teacher. I have experimented with this activity rather sparingly in the classroom. Translation assignments, though optional, have always produced good participation and involvement.

Groups enjoy hearing, discussing and evaluating members' translations. Problematic issues are discussed and solved together. The final work submitted by a group will be the fruit of joint effort, the members having selected the best solution for different items of the text, culminating in the best version of a translation conceivable within that group.

We tend to look upon translation as an art, which, at a literary level, it certainly is. Yet the knack for translation is less rare among our students than we tend to think. A student of mediocre achievement in English might turn up with fairly good results in translation, far above his ability in other aspects of the foreign language learning. The value of the activity as an image booster is immense. Indirectly, the student's attitude towards English might probably become more favourable. The better students generally produce translation of good, or even very good, quality.

In spite of its advantages, translation should always remain in the background of the programme. Consequently, it should take up little classroom time — a side dish, adding colour and flavour."

From Sheila Been and Dvora Ben-Meir, Instructional Television Centre :

"We are in complete agreement with the statement that "systematic translation methods (i.e. "systematic" as against "incidental") will in the end hold pupils back if they have been trained and drilled always to translate back and forth." This proposal recommends that translation be introduced as a separate skill, from English and not into English. . . However, in our opinion the introduction of translation, although intended as a separate skill, will inevitably have a negative backwash effect on general methodology. We also agree that "present training in language proficiency enables pupils to give a general gist of the contents." We believe that this meets the needs of the majority of graduates of our schools. However, we believe that there are two areas which do require more precise understanding :

a) *Instructions*, where imprecision might cause the inability to implement the instructions. This is extremely important, but we believe it can be tested through means other than translation — i.e. pupils would be required to *implement* the instructions (e.g. draw a diagram). The degree of complexity of the instructions could be in keeping with the level of any passage offered for translation, and comprehension accounted for without placing the pupil in the situation of having to focus on language elements. . .

b) *Culture-specific language*. The proposal recommends that passages for translation would not be too idiomatic or culturally-biased. We believe that passages of this sort would be *least valid* as a measure of communicative competence, and therefore would not serve the stated goal of the curriculum, i.e. the fostering of English as a means of international communication. We

believe that it is just in this domain that lack of precise comprehension can lead to linguistic and/or social misunderstanding. However important we believe this domain to be, an attempt to test it raises at least two problems: (i) the translation would have to be from Hebrew to English, e.g. in order to evaluate whether pupils are aware of polite forms, so characteristic of English, the message would have to be given in Hebrew... Similarly, lexical divergencies can only be tested by providing the Hebrew and requiring an appropriate English equivalent, e.g. שירותים = bathroom (Am) toilet/cloakroom (Br.); (ii) if this kind of competence is to be tested, teachers must be provided with explicit guidelines regarding the items to be tested. In view of the enormous range of cultural differences among native English speakers, the different levels of cultural differences among native English speakers, the different levels of appropriacy in varying registers etc., it seems that such guidelines would be impossible to formulate.

We agree that while there is some public opinion favoring the ability to translate, there is probably an equal public opinion which would be satisfied with developing co-ordinate bilinguals. The main difficulty, in our opinion, is to develop these co-ordinate bilinguals, and to introduce the skill of translation would not only create additional difficulties, but might also prejudice the primary goal. There is the danger that the time devoted to the learning of translation skills would be at the expense of time devoted to more crucial language skills.

We support current thinking that favors pragmatic-integrative tests, but we would like to emphasize that Oller's condition on the use of translation is that it should approximate real-life contexts. Any passage which is chosen for its neutrality in terms of idiomatic expression or cultural bias does not meet this condition and hence would not provide information about language proficiency.

We support the principle of developing "an insight into the nature and significance of language..." but feel that other techniques (such as paraphrase recognition and the kind of dictation that requires understanding of prosodic and phonological features, not spelling) would fulfill this objective as adequately as, if not better than, translation.

The conclusion that translation would be seen as a separate skill and would not affect the methodology of teaching the other skills is unreliable. Experience shows, for example, that while the Literature component in the Bagrut was worth only 20 points in the total grade, nevertheless many teachers spent much more time on the literature component than was justified.

The four practical consequences arising from the adoption of the proposal require serious investigation from the point of view of cost effectiveness and practical implementation. Our personal feeling is that if teachers of Grades 11

and 12 are required to be highly proficient in both Hebrew and English, more than 50% of the "good" teachers would be eliminated. They would then be replaced by others who, while fulfilling this requirement, would fall short in other areas which focus on the main objectives of the curriculum.

Although we are not in favor of adding a translation component to the Bagrut examination, we sincerely appreciate and endorse the search for innovative instruments which would be a more viable evaluation of the ability to use English as a means of international communication. We believe that it is possible to develop such instruments. However, we believe that the design of the examination should be changed gradually and in such a way that it would not invite controversy, nor require such drastic and complicated apparatus for implementation...".

From Tzilla Kratter, teacher, Rene Cassin school, Jerusalem

"Although on the first reading of the discussion paper I was worried whether this would not be too difficult for weaker Bagrut pupils, after giving it careful thought and having remembered that this skill is already being tested in the Secretarial Trend, I tend to partially withdraw my reservations.

I can see your point that a high school graduate might be asked, for example as part of a job requirement, to translate an easy text into Hebrew. This, of course, makes your demand meaningful and legitimate.

Still, my biggest reservation is that I am not sure about the *insight* this will give pupils. I believe it will be taught/drilled in the most automatic way possible, just like the "questions" were being taught until last year when the dialogue — which is of course more meaningful — was introduced...

Moreover, even new teachers seem to be unable not to speak Hebrew every now and then in the English lessons. From what I have witnessed they also tend to translate when it is not necessary. Because of that pupils tend to speak Hebrew whenever they get a chance, especially if the teacher is not terribly against it. For one of my classes I have actually had to prepare a list of stock expressions, such as "How do you say...?", "I didn't understand", "Would you please repeat..." and suchlike.

I am afraid that "legalizing" translation in the English lesson will make it systematic and in the long run will not be beneficial."

From Elana Shohamy, School of Education, Tel Aviv University:

"A distinction needs to be made between translation as a *goal* — the skill of providing the exact meaning of words in the foreign language for their equivalents in the mother-tongue — and translation as a *means* — a procedure for checking reading or listening comprehension, i.e. transmitting/reporting the information in the foreign language into the mother-tongue (with the emphasis on information and not on lexical and grammatical accuracy). I am not sure as to what type

of translation Raphael Gefen implied when he spoke recently at a session held at Tel Aviv University. I would like to believe that he meant translation as a means for reading comprehension, but since he spoke about translation as an additional skill to be taught directly, I tend to believe that he meant translation as a goal, in which case it may deserve to be considered an independent skill: translation as such is an art and a skill and needs careful and intensive training and is different from the four skills which are already being taught. However, if Raphael Gefen implied translation as a means, as a technique for checking the comprehension of texts, I do not see how it significantly differs from many other techniques currently used for teaching and testing reading and listening comprehension. As such it is an integral part of those skills.

Translation as a goal: This is a very difficult task, requiring training and knowledge in both languages and experience in the skill. Still, if the people responsible for planning the Israeli curriculum decide that translation is an important need for Israeli secondary school students, then they should add it to the curriculum and it should be implemented. In the event that such a decision is made, it must be tested as well. If it is important enough to teach then it is important enough to test. Testing helps implement the curriculum, and teaching and testing should go hand in hand. It is important to note that when translation as a goal is tested, attention should be paid not just to the accuracy of the information but also to the quality of the lexicon, the structure, the style, etc. I personally do not think that translation should be taught as a goal for Israeli secondary school students. I do not think that there are enough situations in real life that provide a justification for teaching it to Israeli students...

Translation as a means: Translation as a means for checking reading or listening comprehension is a very useful and effective technique. It is an easier task for students to be able to show their comprehension through reporting the information in their own language than to ask them to put it in the foreign language as well. Translation as a means does not involve providing word-for-word equivalence, but rather reporting the information of the text in their own language. Thus, it can be vague or precise, according to the nature of the text and the requirement of the teacher or tester. Some texts demand more careful and detailed translations, others demand just the reporting of general information; but the common feature of all these types of translation is that the student is required to report the foreign language textual information in his own language. As such, translation is the purest method of checking the reader's comprehension of text. Translation tasks seem to provide the best evidence of students' comprehension of texts... As a procedure for checking reading comprehension, translation has important advantages over other procedures which are currently used to tap comprehension. It has least method interference — doing a Cloze

or multiple-choice or even answering questions stated in the foreign language tend to affect the reading comprehension trait. The skill of choosing among alternatives (for a multiple-choice test, especially if the questions and the distractors are in the foreign language), or the skill of filling in blanks for Cloze type tests may affect the score on such tests. Moreover, the possibility that the teacher will be distracted from the content of the information reported, because of the form, structure and choice of vocabulary in answering in the foreign language, may also affect the score of the test-taker. Reporting the information of the text in one's own mother-tongue is least affected by the testing procedure and by other skills of writing or speaking.

Translation as a procedure is also an authentic type of activity. Andrew Cohen (1980) notes that students often read a textbook in the foreign language, take notes in the native language, use a bilingual dictionary and when they listen to a lecture in the foreign language take notes in their native language and even ask questions in their native language. Thus, testing exercises that elicit responses in their native language would not only be natural but sometimes preferable. Reporting the information in the mother-tongue is possibly a more authentic task that students are engaged in anyway.

Randall Jones (1977) reports that there are probably more "closet" translation testers in the profession today than we would care to believe. Sewel (1974) makes a strong point in favor of using translation for testing reading proficiency, pointing out that it provides precise information about weak points, and discriminates well between weak and strong students. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in the U.S. has been using oral translation for reading comprehension tests for many years. In these tests the test-taker is asked to read a passage and give an oral summary.

Problems and Limitations: There are several problems which are linked to the use of translation as a procedure, as a means of checking comprehension.

The most obvious problem is rater reliability, i.e. the degree of agreement among independent raters (judges) as to the quality of the information which is being transmitted by the student. It is difficult to determine the exact criteria for the quality of the information transmitted in terms of the amount and the accuracy of information. As a result there is little chance that independent raters will agree with each other: reliability strongly affects the quality of the test since decision-makers will have little confidence that the score obtained is reliable and actually reflects the comprehension level of the test-taker. In the detailed type of translation there are literally hundreds of potential errors, ranging in importance from insignificant to very critical. Unless they are well-trained, scorers cannot be expected to evaluate all the test consistently.

A second major problem with this type of procedure is the danger that the

teacher will switch translation from being a means to becoming a goal, from a technique to an objective, from reporting information to word-for-word translation. This will be a step backwards from the reading strategies currently used where students are discouraged from focusing on the meaning of each and every word and are trained instead to infer meanings and build hypotheses which lead them to comprehend texts more efficiently. This approach encourages the use of strategies of reading without the need to know every word. Translation as a goal may affect negatively the motivation of students to read, since it will indicate to them that they need much more knowledge before they are capable of reading and comprehending, thus creating unrealistic goals reading for comprehension.

A third problem with translation as it is proposed here is that of the Hebrew proficiency of English teachers in Israel, which may create a problem in reading the translations, understanding them and consequently evaluating them.

These three problems can be controlled before the teachers/testers are encouraged to make use of the translation procedure for checking reading comprehension. The rater reliability problem can be overcome by the careful training of scorers and by creating specific guidelines for checking tests. The second problem can be overcome by training teachers and explaining to them the purpose and limitations of the procedure. The third problem should be examined and, if found to be true, only those teachers who are proficient in reading Hebrew should use the technique.

To conclude, based on the discussion above, it seems obvious that the advantages of using translation as a means outweigh the disadvantages and I support its use within the above framework.

(Editor's note: This type of procedure has been in use for some years in the GEMER test and will be introduced into some forms of the BAGRUT examination as from Summer 1983.)

3. EFFICIENCY IN LANGUAGE

by Penny Ur, Har V'Gai School, Kibbutz Dafna
(reprinted from *English Teaching Forum*, U.S.A.)

We want to make our teaching better. How do we do it?

The obvious answer is by improving our methodology; by studying, practicing, keeping up with the literature on the subject. But the use of "accredited" teaching methods does not bring about effective teaching and learning unless subordinated to the principle of *efficiency* — that is, the attainment of the maximum profit (in terms of achieved learner proficiency) for the minimum cost (in terms of the teacher's and learners' time and effort).

Methodology

Of all the variables that contribute to a class's success in learning a language, the method used may be one of the least significant. Jakobovits (1970) gives one set of such variables which he divides into learner, instructional, and sociocultural factors. *Learner factors* include such things as linguistic ability, intelligence, and motivation; *sociocultural factors* include language loyalty, ethnocentrism, and anomie; *instructional factors* include the frequency, length, and distribution of lessons, the number of students in the class, the teacher's knowledge and personality, expected interference from the native language, available teaching aids, and strategy.

Only the last two items — aids and strategy — bear any relation to methodology. It is all the others that mainly determine the success or failure of a course; method, then, seems relatively unimportant.

The above conclusion is borne out by studies that have found a definite relation between foreign-language learning and such factors as motivation (Lambert 1967) or language aptitude (Carroll 1965), but little or none between achievement and method. As Jakobovits says: "Numerous studies in the last twenty-five years or so have attempted to resolve the issue of the effectiveness of various methods of foreign-language teaching, none of which has been adequate enough to permit any definitive conclusion." (See also Brumfit 1977 for a comprehensive description of the difficulties in making methodological studies.) If method were a significant variable in foreign-language instruction, we should expect comparative studies of different methods, such as the Scherer-Wertheimer experiment (Scherer-Wertheimer 1962), to yield more or less unequivocal results. As it is, we must conclude that the choice of method has relatively little effect.

Where does that leave us? Does it really not matter which method we use?

Of course it matters. But not because one method is intrinsically better than another, or because the right choice of teaching strategy will make a drastic difference in learner achievement. It matters, first of all, because even the apparently small differences that the right choice makes are significant in terms of overall results. Selecting a more effective strategy will not make a class of failures into a class of brilliant overachievers, but it may shift them up a point or two, which, especially for the marginal ones, may make all the difference.

It matters, secondly, because, small as it is, it is the only variable over which we, the teachers, have control. All the others are beyond us: there is not much we can do about a slow learner, an overcrowded classroom, or prejudice against the language we teach; but we can adapt our method to the setting in such a way that, within the conditions imposed on us, we can reach our goals with maximum efficiency.

Thirdly, method can make lessons more interesting and have a positive effect on intrinsic motivation. (This is borne out to some extent by the Scherer-Wertheimer experiment.) This added motivation may not be reflected as much as we would like in actual progress, but it is valuable in itself.

Variety, choice and conflict

Today the methodology student or beginning teacher is confused by a multitude of recommended approaches to language teaching, each carrying its battery of classroom techniques: the grammar-translation method with its lists of translated vocabulary and complex grammatical rules and exceptions; the audiolingual method with its drills and choral work; cognitive code-learning with its inductive and deductive exercises; the functional-notional method with its situational dialogues and communication games — to name but a few. This wide spectrum of methods and the rich choice of accompanying materials is not in itself a bad thing. What *is* bad is the fact that one method is usually supported at the expense of another. Arguments are too often polemic: "His method is wrong and detrimental; mine is good because it corrects all his mistakes." The teacher is left with the implied conclusion that there is a "right" and a "wrong" method; and by a dangerous corollary, she is led to feel that if she is using a "wrong" method, she must be a bad teacher. How many of us, since the grammar-translation method became disreputable, have felt guilty about using so obvious a tactic as translation in our lessons?

Some comforting books and articles have discussed the problem (Stevens 1977, Finocchiaro 1975, Mullins 1980, Close 1977, Marckwardt 1975) — all reassuring us that we are not alone in our confusion, and that the choice is ours. But they give no real answer to such questions as "How do I choose?" or "How far may I be eclectic?"

Summary

This brings us back to the question asked at the beginning of this article, to which books and articles on methodology give no clear-cut answer, and may even be misleading. They give us an inflated idea of the importance of method in the teaching-learning process, they inculcate in us the dubious notion that there are methods that are intrinsically "better" or "worse"; they (unintentionally) belittle our own healthy intuitions about what will or will not "work" for us; they provide us with a wealth of possibilities but no standard by which to judge which we should use or in what combination.

But we must somehow, sometime, choose our teaching strategy, tactic, aid. How do we do it?

EFFICIENCY

The overriding principle of the teaching-learning process should be *efficiency*. Or, to put it another way: within the given conditions of my teaching task, how I can achieve my aims with the most favorable ratio of profit (achieved proficiency) to cost (time and work). Efficiency thus makes two prior claims on the teacher: to assess her teaching conditions and to state her aims. Only after she has done this can she choose her strategy.¹ At this stage, but not before, she may exploit her methodological knowledge in order to choose appropriate and effective techniques.

Teaching conditions

Teaching conditions include the physical and temporal organization of the course, the background, character, age, and abilities of the learners, the personality, knowledge, and abilities of the teacher.

When considering the *physical and temporal organization* of the course, the teacher must ask herself such questions as: How many students are there in the class? What are the room and furniture like? What teaching materials and aids are available? How many lessons do I have a week? At what times? How long is a lesson? How much homework is acceptable here? What extracurricular activities may help or interfere with my course? How much preparation time will I have?

The background, character, age, and abilities of the learners are found out in part as the teacher goes along; but much of this is usually known before the course starts — the age of the students, their sociocultural background, their native language, and its likely interference effects. Exactly how motivated they are, what discipline problems there may be, how they react to specific teacher tactics — this is all learned later by experience.

The personality, knowledge, and abilities of the teacher are, we hope, more or less known to herself, but it behooves her to do a little self-assessment along these lines: How well do I know the language I am required to teach? What are my shortcomings and strong points as a teacher? What is the range of techniques I have at my disposal (i.e., that I have used or know I could if I wanted to)?

1. I prefer to use Jakobovits's term *strategy* rather than *method*, as the latter term has come to be associated with certain approaches that comprise specific sets of techniques, whereas *strategy* is not so bound.

Aims and objectives

The formulation of aims is only partly the province of the teacher. Often she must teach a course for which the materials are specified, or one that leads to a specific exam, with a set of objectives already implied; or she may teach an ESP course linked to a particular subject and set of skills. But in other cases, particularly in elementary-school teaching where the subject is EGP (English for General Purposes), the teacher may have to formulate her own aims. These should be expressed in terms of the terminal skills and abilities (Widdowson 1978) expected of the pupils.² But whether or not the teacher has to formulate her own long-term aims, she is the one who must break them down into immediate objectives, guided by whatever course materials she is using.

For example, one of the aims of a school course may be a certain level of proficiency in day-to-day conversation, but the objective of a particular set of lessons may be the acquisition of the ability to ask questions in order to elicit information, and a still more limited objective may be the increase of fluency in the use of such questions. The more short-term the objective, the greater the responsibility of the teacher for its formulation and achievement.

The aims and objectives of a course are bound to be affected considerably by the teaching conditions enumerated in the previous section.

Deciding on strategy

Having clear in her mind both the teaching situation and the aims of the course, the teacher is now ready to use all her knowledge of and experience with different methods, psychological theory and linguistics in choosing a strategy that will be maximally effective.

Being unable in an article of this length to describe an entire teaching situation, I shall deal with certain aspects of a teaching situation and course aims, and suggest some of their practical implications for efficient classroom strategy. My approach will naturally be idiosyncratic: I do not mean this to be a recipe, but an example of the process by which decisions may be made.

Let's say that I want to teach a set of lexical items to one of my classes in preparation for an instructional television program. The class is a group of elementary-school children of mixed ability (1), with fairly high motivation, well disciplined, with good learning habits, but whose first language is totally unrelated to English (1a). I have at my disposal blackboard and chalk (2) and an overhead projector, which is a hundred meters away and would have to be brought in

2. One such detailed formulation of aims, in terms of notions and functions, is given in *The Threshold Level* (van Ek 1978).

and returned (3). The course is aimed at the acquisition of both oral and written skills and abilities, as a basis for more specific courses later (4). The class meets in the early morning, so the children will be fresh and at their most receptive during the first few minutes of the lesson(5). Their attention span is not very long (they are ten-year-olds) (6), and I know from experience that the number of new items they can absorb at a sitting is not more than eight or ten (see 1a above). They get frustrated and restless if they lose the thread of what I am saying or do not understand for any length of time; the meanings of the items must therefore be made clear quickly (7). My knowledge of methods and psychology teaches me that distributed, varied learning is most effective (Orme 1978); that material that is reinforced visually is absorbed better than that which is presented by oral means alone (9); that material which children work over and reproduce in meaningful combinations of their own is learned more thoroughly (Stevick 1970) (10); and so on. I know also, from my own experience, that when children learn the spellings of words, for some reason they learn the meanings better, too (11).

Therefore, linking my methodological conclusions by number to the situation described above: out of a total of twenty-five possible new items for the telecast, I choose ten for active mastery (1a) and present them briefly (6) at the beginning of the lesson (5), returning to them again at the middle and at the end(8). I display their written form (9), probably on the blackboard, as it is not worth bringing the overhead projector all that distance for the short time I would use it (3). I present the meanings first through illustration, if possible, or target-language analogy or explanation, and then give native-language equivalents to make sure all have understood (7). I get the children to compose their own utterances about the material, linking these to a communicative situation (10). I ask them to learn the spelling of the words for homework (3)(11), assigning fewer for the slower learners and adding extra words for the quicker ones (1).

The above illustration gives only some of the simplest and most obvious factors to be taken into account, and their application in practice. In a real situation there are many more: their scope is wider, their nature more complex, and their interaction more involved than I have shown. But I am not trying here to give an exhaustive exposition of the idea of efficiency, only to present a principle, the implications of which teachers will work out for themselves. The complexity and number of the factors to be considered when planning efficient strategy is daunting; however, this is often in fact done intuitively. One hears teachers say things like "That will work well in *my* class," or "*He* can teach through role-play; I know *I* can't," or "Can't do that in *our* school; rules forbid it" — all of which are practical comments on aspects of the efficiency of different techniques.

In fact, each separate premise and conclusion in the illustration is obvious and simple: a matter of common sense. And efficiency is a matter of common sense; that is all it is. Foreign languages are often taught inefficiently simply because teachers do not stop and think and work out these common-sense conclusions for themselves, they have no time or energy, or they rely too much on methods recommended by the "experts," or they lack the necessary self-confidence.

Or perhaps they just have not thought of it. I hope now they will.

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4. PREPARING AN ALBUM AS A CLASS PROJECT

by Ora Schnabel, Herzlia

RATIONALE — the pedagogical principles underlying the project

I teach at the Municipal High School of Herzlia, a school with a long tradition of international relations, thanks to Mrs. Esther Lucas, previously the head of our English Department. Our international relations include correspondence, the exchange of albums with different schools abroad and the exchange of delegations.

The album is usually prepared as a class project with the aim of introducing Israel, and our students as individuals, to young people all over the world. We

have sent albums to almost every country in the world, including Egypt, and the reaction was always positive and enthusiastic. I have already prepared several albums with my classes, and I have come to the conclusion that a project of that kind makes the teaching of English very effective and has other advantages as well. Pupils are highly motivated and stimulated because each one is free to choose what he wants to do. When they write or present anything they are really trying to communicate in English. They use English naturally and in a very real situation. The preparation of the album enables us as teachers to apply various teaching methods like group work, individual work, frontal lessons etc. The class as a group gains a lot out of it as well — pupils get the chance to know each other by finding common fields of interests and working on them. Individual pupils who are otherwise hesitant and inhibited get the chance to prove themselves, and may even emerge as group leaders.

I suggested the idea of preparing an album to my Grade 9 class only after showing them the big collection of albums we have at school, duplicates of albums prepared in previous years and albums we received from different countries. Pupils felt enthusiastic and started planning their work.

In my work with those pupils I had some guidelines. I let my pupils work independently. I never rejected an idea proposed by a pupil or by a group of pupils.

Another guideline was concerned with the correction of pupils' mistakes. I never corrected or change anything as long as it could be understood. Sometimes pupils would come back to school with a page or two that they had completed at home on their own. Had I been asked I would have done it differently, but once the work was done I corrected only those mistakes that could mislead the readers.

Another guideline was to involve every single pupil in the class. Each one contributed according to his talents, ability and personality.

II. Preparation of the Album

a) *Organizing the work*

Once the pupils had accepted the idea of preparing an album they were asked to form groups, and each group had to choose its own topic. At this phase each group discussed what they could do and how they could carry it out. They decided what kind of material they needed and how their work should be organized. The groups then let me know what they were doing — I made a list of their choices which later became the different sections of the album.

The following topics have been chosen :

Letters of introduction or Would you like to be my pen-pal, Dictionary, Our Time Table, Israeli Stamps, Ingathering and Roots, Views and Sites, The Kibbutz, The Scouts, I.D.F. and Gadna, Jerusalem Sports, A cassette — "From Israel With Love".

It was made clear to the pupils that in addition to the album itself we usually prepare a duplicate which is kept at school and is added to our rich collection of albums (both those sent to and received from other schools abroad).

b) *The different sections of the album*

1. *Letters of introduction*

Pupils felt that it would be interesting if each one could introduce himself by describing his hobbies, his family and his everyday life. They arranged the letters in the album in such a way that they could be easily taken out.

Each pupil added his own photograph and wrote his address so that the recipients would be able to answer them and so start a correspondence.

In class I devoted two frontal lessons to showing them how a letter in English should be written, what has to be included and how they can improve their writing.

2. *Dictionary* — Pupils felt that their 'dictionary' could give people abroad an idea of what Hebrew sounds like. They drew a picture of a certain item, wrote the word in Hebrew and then added its pronunciation in English. The group that worked on this section consisted of three girls who, in my opinion, have managed to choose some common and useful words and expressions.

3. *Our Time-Table*

Pupils felt that other pupils abroad would like to know what subjects they learn. They decided to draw their time-table and add an explanation. The names of the different subjects were taught in class frontally. Then each pupil drew the Time-Table in his notebook. In addition the following structures were practised in class :

a) How many times a week do you learn ?

We learn (twice) a week
(three times)

b) What do you learn on Sunday ?

On Sunday we learn and

c) What lessons do you have on Monday ?

On Monday for the fifth lesson we have

d) Which subject do you like best ? Why ?

I like best, because I am good at it, etc.

Guided writing summarized that activity. Each pupil had to write a composition entitled "Our Time-Table". The best composition was expanded and included in the album.

4. *Israeli Stamps*

Pupils noted that a lot can be learnt about any country from its stamps. Therefore they collected various stamps and in the end selected those stamps which describe our holidays, those which have the signs of the Zodiac, those which describe the Twelve Tribes and others with views, flowers, animals and mountains.

5. *Ingathering*

This is certainly a topic which concerns each one of us and our society as a whole. Pupils felt that they would like to express it somehow. In addition to the pictures and drawings they wrote a composition describing a successful evening on "Roots" which summarized the topic "Myself and My Family" — a project all the Grade 9 classes dealt with, and which was naturally connected with the Ingathering.

6. *Views*

From the pictures and photographs which pupils collected they chose the ones that are typical of our landscape and those that emphasize its beauty.

7. *The Kibbutz*

The group which chose that topic felt that the kibbutz is really unique and definitely a phenomenon everyone abroad would like to familiarize himself with. The pupils of that group went to Kibbutz Glil-Yam, which is not far from our school. In Glil-Yam they were offered a lot of material on the history of Kibbutz Glil-Yam itself, but they felt that they needed more general information. They therefore went to Kibbutz Shefayim too. There they were given different booklets which they could use (and included some in the album). They also planned to spend a few days in a kibbutz in order to take some authentic photographs; but when they realized how expensive it would be they gave the idea up.

8. *The Scouts*

Many pupils in this class are Scouts, and since this is really an international youth movement a large group of pupils chose that topic. They translated the Scouts' Laws into English and wrote a composition which tried to show what the Israeli Scouts had in common with Scouts all over the world and what is typical of Israeli Scouts.

9. *I.D.F.*

The Israel Army is really an integral part of our life — fathers, brothers, sisters and friends serve in the army and therefore pupils felt they could not prepare an album on Israel without including the I.D.F. They also added some material about their activities in "Gadna" and "Shelach".

10. *Jerusalem*

Again — those who chose this topic felt that we could not send an album without something about our capital, emphasizing the fact that Jews and Arabs live there together peacefully.

11. *Sports*

Many pupils decided to choose that topic but they did not have any material. One of the mothers, who teaches at the Wingate Institute, volunteered to help and invited them to that Institute. A group of six pupils spent an afternoon there choosing material and sorting it out. When they returned they knew what they were going to write about. If I had to use the material they brought I would perhaps use it differently, but this did not really matter.

12. *Our Newspapers*

We publish two newspapers in our school — one in Hebrew and another in English. Pupils felt that the inclusion of a copy of those newspapers could reflect the needs, problems and the atmosphere at our school.

13. *A Cassette — "From Israel With Love"*

Two pupils decided to prepare a cassette with interviews. In these interviews pupils from our class and from other classes expressed their views on international relations and their importance. Israel is isolated, so it is important to have friends abroad, friends who will know something about Israel and will be able to support us. The pupils themselves made up the questions, chose those whom they interviewed and used Israeli songs as background. In addition, they described some famous places in Israel and provided the songs related to them — the Galilee, Kinnereth, the Golan Heights, En-Gedi etc. The cassette was attached to the last page of the album.

Evaluation of the advantages and benefits of the project

III. *Was the effort worthwhile?*

Thinking back I can only feel proud, because the project was carried out so successfully and had so many advantages both from the language point of view and for the class as a group and as individuals.

The album itself was taken to Germany by a delegation of our pupils that spent the summer there and delivered it to the *Anna Schmidt Schule* in Frankfurt. It caused great excitement, and we are looking forward to receiving an album from Germany. Some pupils have already received letters in reply to their individual letters.

The duplicate will be kept at school and will be added to our rich collection.

Pupils were able to improve and enrich their English while working on the album — they learnt how to write a simple letter, they learnt the names of all the subjects taught in the 9th grade and wrote short guided compositions about them, they learnt the English names of different places in Israel, they translated and used English almost freely to write about Jerusalem, the Western Wall, Roots, etc.

The class as a group really had a wonderful sense of achievement when we put all the pages together and suddenly saw a beautiful album. Everyone was involved in it, in one way or another, everyone participated and therefore everyone felt great satisfaction when it was finished.

For a few pupils this was the chance to prove themselves. The school counsellor was both amazed and pleased to hear about the pupils who were specially active in the preparation of the album. The two of them suddenly found a way of expressing themselves, initiating and taking responsibility.

There is no doubt that it was worth the time and effort put into it in spite of the fact that we spent many hours together after school in the afternoons, in the evenings and even during holidays.

5. TESTING ORAL PROFICIENCY — A Suggested New Approach

by *Nelson A. Berkoff*, Hebrew University

A. Introduction

It is generally agreed that the present Bagrut interview-type of oral examination is unsatisfactory for two main reasons:

1. the interview is too loosely structured, As a result some pupils are able to introduce prepared speeches, nervous pupils tend to be rendered speechless, and the good or bad mood of the single examiner can 'colour' the whole tone of the interview.

2. the marking is unreliable since it is the subjective evaluation of a single examiner who has received no training in the semi-objective evaluation of spoken language.

Thea Reves' suggestion (ETJ, 1980) for a group-type examination with four pupils discussing selected 'themes' deals partially with point No. 1; and her

suggestion that there be two examiners deals partially with point No. 2. There is no doubt that these suggestions deserve serious research, particularly in view of the generally favourable reactions of teachers who have tried them out (ETJ, 1980).

Nevertheless the uncertain nature of the group-type test still enables one or two of the four to dominate the conversation and still penalizes the nervous or introvert pupil. But the main weakness of both the interview and the group type is the haphazard nature of the marking, which is quite unreliable.

Reliability can be improved by increasing the number of markers so that having two markers (as in the group test) instead of the usual one (as in the interview test) is a great step forward. Another way of improving reliability is variety in the material being talked about, and that is why more than one 'theme' is necessary. Reliability is greatly improved by giving examiners clear criteria to mark by: criteria such as "grammatical accuracy" or "richness of vocabulary" are too vague to be of any use and merely invite unreliability. Finally, reliability can be increased by the examiners having clear instructions and standard models which have been calibrated and which they are familiar with. This last point will be dealt with in more detail below.

B. Suggestions

1. *A New Type of Examination*

I suggest a third type of test which I will call the interaction-type. This would be a discussion between three people which would be taped. After the first minute or so one of the three will stop talking and whenever her or his turn comes the tape will be silent and the examinee will be expected to respond instead. The examiners will evaluate those responses. The preparation of such tapes will not be easy — they could be based on recordings of actual discussions between pupils, they could be specially written, or a combination of both. The two sponsors who speak all the time could be native speakers (though this is not essential) and 'the third one' could be a speaker with an Israeli accent. All this would have to be worked out in more detail.

The advantage of this method is that the examinee will be "directed" in his replies and thus cannot produce a prepared speech; it will prevent extraneous digressions; and it will free the class teacher from having to intervene to revive a dying conversation.

2. *The Marking*

My experience is that an examiner asked to judge simultaneously "grammatical accuracy" and "fluency of speech" and "communicative ability" (without being told what any of them mean) on, say, a scale from 0-10 will tend to

group them all around 7 or 8 with an occasional 6 and an occasional 9, so that we are back at the halo effect again; this is still the bad, old subjective marking. I do not believe that an examiner is capable of reliably giving three independent marks to pupils every 12 minutes for 4 hours, and I suggest that we abandon any such scheme. A five point scale is a reasonable one; it could be based on Proficiency Ratings which are closely spelled out for each level. The following ratings are based on Wilds, 1975, with some modifications.

Level 1.

- can ask and answer questions on familiar topics;
- can understand simple questions and statements;
- speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary ideas;
- errors in grammar are frequent but can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners.

Level 2.

- can handle with confidence but not with facility conversations about current events, family and work;
- can get the gist of most conversations and has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to express himself simply;
- can usually handle elementary structures accurately but does not have a thorough or confident control of the grammar.

Level 3.

- able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most conversations on general topics;
- comprehension is quite complete for a normal rate of speech;
- rarely has to grope for a word;
- accent may be obviously foreign;
- control of grammar good, errors rarely interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

Level 4.

- able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels of conversation (formal, informal, general topics and specialized topics);
- can understand and participate in conversation with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary;
- would rarely be taken for a native speaker but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations;
- errors of pronunciation and grammar quite rare.

Level 5.

- speaking proficiency equal to that of an educated native speaker;
- has complete fluency in the language including breadth of vocabulary and idiom.

Calibration

Tape recordings of pupils' speech will be collected so that a number of examples of all levels will be available. Thus we will have a bank of 'calibrated' speech. Prospective examiners will be required to take a short course (2-4 hours) in which the principles of evaluation will be explained to them and the calibrated examples played. They will then be required to evaluate other examples and only those with a high level of success will be accepted as "Official Examiners" and only they will be allowed to examine for Bagrut.

C. Research Plan

Step 1. About 30 taped examples of pupils' speech will be collected and these will be calibrated as examples of Levels 1-3. A selected number of school and University teachers will attend a half-day workshop in which the aims of the experiment will be explained, some of the tapes will be heard and will be discussed and the rationale of the calibration will be explained. Finally they will be tested on some of the other tapes, and only those who pass this test satisfactorily will be accepted as examiners.

Step 2. At least four tapes will be prepared for the interaction-tape tests — on four different themes, two with 'the third speaker' a male and two a female.

Step 3. A team of six examiners will visit a selected number of schools that agree to participate in the experiment and all three types of tests will be used on the Grade 11 pupils with two examiners for each type. If we assume that 4 hours in a day is the maximum than an examiner can work without fatigue influencing his marking, then in both the interview and the interaction type some 20-25 pupils can be examined in one day and in the group-type about 45 (if there are three in a group).

The Research Design would look like this :

Pupils 1-22 take the interview exam and are tested by Team A (2 examiners)

Pupils 23-44 take the interaction exam and are tested by Team B (2 examiners)

Pupils 1-44 take the group exam (3 in a group) and are tested by Team C (2 examiners)

This is not a perfect design but it does mean that every pupil will take the group test and in addition one half will take the interview and the other half the interaction. Thus every pupil will be evaluated by 4 trained examiners, to which we can add the class teacher's mark.

Pupils will be asked to take part in a general discussion about the tests and their comments should be kept.

6. PROPOSAL FOR THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN SPECIAL CLASSES FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

by *Alon Kramer*, Director, Dept. for Gifted Children, Ministry of Education

Introduction : Gifted children provide a mechanism for collecting in a single educational setting the academically most talented students in any given geographical area. Being that the selection process is general (using a broad-based IQ score as the fundamental criterion) rather than subject-specific, the range of academic abilities in any given subject area tends to be very broad, from the only slightly above-average to the highly — or even “severely” — gifted. Thus, it is not educationally feasible, much less desirable, to limit learning, and therefore the curricula created to promote learning, merely to knowledge acquisition and mastery of specific content. Rather, the purpose of instruction in these classes should be to provide an intellectual framework within which each student can develop to the limit of his potentialities within a range of different areas and directions. For those students who are strongly motivated in a particular subject area, there need to be opportunities for almost unlimited growth, both in terms of mastery of more advanced content, as well as in higher levels of conceptual functioning and development in that subject area. For those who are less talented and/or motivated in a given area, emphasis should be placed on understanding the basic principles of the discipline, application of skills and knowledge to other fields of study, and exploration of relationships to other disciplines.

In general, then, instruction in special classes should be directed toward the following set of basic objectives :

- 1) extending the *knowledge and skill used* to the extent of each student's ability in each subject area ;
- 2) development of the interrelationships *between* areas of knowledge, both in terms of content and process ;
- 3) extension of intellectual skills to *higher cognitive levels*, such as abstraction, synthesis, comparison, integration, production of knowledge, etc. ;
- 4) *activation* of the learning process by placing greater emphasis on the quality of the student's intellectual *production* — not just what he *knows*, but what he can *do* with what he knows : different ways of organising information ; developing cogency of intellectual expression ; designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating independent projects ; and even the creation of original ideas and concepts ;
- 5) the development of the student's realistic sense-of-self and ability to function in the world, both independently and under external direction, alone and with others, in areas in which he is strong and in areas in which he is

weak. The student must develop a capability for systematic thought as well as for spontaneous, creative production. He must develop a flexibility of thinking and an acceptance of the thoughts and needs of others. He must develop the perspicacity to design, plan, implement, and complete projects at levels consistent with his ability. He must understand how his giftedness affects his place in society — the opportunities it makes available to him and the responsibilities it places on him; and

6) the development of an active critical *intellectual independence*, through which each student becomes a "lifetime learner" at the level of his individual ability and interests.

Instructional Objectives

On the basis of these general objectives, the specific objectives of English instruction should be viewed expansively and dynamically — both in terms of Mastery of the language and in terms of its Application within related fields of knowledge.

Mastery: The gifted student should develop an *active command* of the English language to the point of fluency, both spoken and written if possible, as an international means of communication. This should include facility in the grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and use of English in the modern world. Beyond this, the student should understand the structure of the English language, as a means of gaining greater insight into the nature and function of human language in general (comparative and contrastive linguistics, for example) and specifically of his own mother tongue.

Application: The gifted student should also gain fluency in English as a *means of access* to those scientific, technological, humanistic, and literary developments which are predominantly (if not exclusively) available in that language. This should go far beyond a "great thoughts" approach with, as much as possible, such exposures having a future orientation, thus preparing the student to cope with the world as it *will be* during his lifetime. From a cognitive standpoint, this requires that the student learn the vocabulary and usage of language in a rapidly changing technological world. From an affective standpoint, this requires that a student develop at least a minimal degree of comfort and "naturalness" in the use of English. Only in this way will he develop the skill and inclination to continue his use of English beyond the period of his formal education.

Methodology and Instructional Strategies

In order to implement these above objectives, an appropriate methodology must be selected, one that recognizes both the demands and challenges that

must be included in gifted-child education as well as the great divergency of talents and interests among both students and teachers.

1) Instruction in English vocabulary, structure, and usage should be systematic, sequential, and flexibly paced. Less emphasis should be placed on group drill and practice activities, and each student should be encouraged to progress as quickly as possible to higher levels of mastery and to creative use of language. This creativity, despite its tremendous value, should not come in the place of precision, however, and each new step in development should be reinforced and integrated before moving ahead.

2) Learning of rules and procedures should be consistently complemented and enriched with linguistic experiences, both comparative and contrastive. Emphasis should be placed on the "how" and "why" of English structure, how the student can use an understanding of this structure to improve his facility, how he can relate English structure to comparable Hebrew language forms, how the structure of English determines information-processing within the language, and related issues.

3) Language facility and ease of communication should be developed by creative activities wherever possible: improvisation and dramatics, debates, simulations, pencil-and-paper and board games (Scrabble, Probe, Jotto, hangman, etc.). Students should be taught how to phrase and ask (not just answer) questions and to defend all positions taken clearly and cogently.

4) Precision of communication, expressive as well as grammatical, should be emphasized at all levels. The question must always be asked: What is the clearest and most precise way of expressing what *I wish to express*?

5) English should be treated as an *active* vehicle of communication. Students should be encouraged to express perceptions, feelings, and convictions whenever possible. Contemporary issues in Israel and the world should be explored, through English language newspapers in Israel and current international English language periodicals. Issues of immediate concern to students — relationships, social roles and mores, their future place in society — should be dealt with in English, with emphasis on separating fact from opinion, listening and responding skills, etc. Arrangements should be made on a regular basis for students to interact with native speakers of English from a wide variety of backgrounds — in order to gain exposure to a number of speaking styles and to hear and use the language in a range of different contexts.

6) Emphasis should also be placed on higher-level cognitive functions and the extension of the student's ability to process and analyze information. Thus, even the most elementary readings should be selected on the basis of their potentialities for encouraging thought and discussion. Simple "who" and "what" questions should, as rapidly as possible, be replaced with "how," "why,"

"what might have happened if," and "what would you have done in that situation," etc.

7) Selection of literature should be made with three objectives in mind: A) to continually expose students to new and more sophisticated literary forms (including poetry, drama, short stories, and ultimately even short novels); B) to provide vehicles for discussion of topics which are contemporary and relevant to students (thus, priority should be placed on quality modern literature whenever possible); and, C) to offer students enjoyable and self-enriching experiences in literature, in order to encourage them to view reading in English as a worthwhile activity on its own merits (thus, a certain degree of free — or choice — reading should be included at all grade levels, beginning with simplified works and moving as rapidly as possible to works in their original forms).

8) Whenever possible, readings in English should be selected to "match" with topics being studied simultaneously in other classes. If the history class is studying World War II, for example, the English class could arrange to deal at the same time with selected speeches of Winston Churchill or Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A study of *Hamlet* in translation in Hebrew literature class might be accompanied by a reading in the original of selected soliloquies. Similarly, a study of genetics, space travel, or developments in micro-computers could be complemented by an appropriate magazine or encyclopedia article in the English class. Such "matching" should be done on the basis of planned cooperation between subject teachers and, ideally, should form the basis for interdisciplinary studies on a school-wide or even project-wide basis in the future.

The Curriculum

1) The Core Curriculum should consist of those elements of the existing English curriculum that form the basis for language acquisition (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, language uses, etc.). Pacing should be determined by the demonstrated ability of each class of students to master such material and of the range of *individual abilities* within each class. Variations between classes both in speed of language and acquisition and modifications in the Core Curriculum to accommodate to individual needs should be accepted. Under no circumstances should arbitrary decisions as to proper sequence or speed of learning be allowed to take precedence over the *quality* of learning within each class.

The Supplementary Curriculum should consist of a series of teacher-directed Units and Activities (to be developed by special class teachers and/or acquired from external sources) available to be used in a flexible manner as needs arise

and as opportunities can be created. Units should be developed in the following areas :

- A) Linguistics : comparative and contrastive, etymology, etc.
- B) Games and Simulations : both linguistic and expressive activities to encourage and facilitate the development of language fluency.
- C) Communication and Expression : suggestions on questioning techniques (for students and teachers), how to structure debate formats (including suggested topics), coercive language (propaganda and advertising), body language and non-verbal communication, etc.
- D) Literature : recommended readings in all genres including an analysis of readability for each work, suggested topics for discussion, etc.
- E) Translation : both from Hebrew to English and English to Hebrew, with emphasis on clarity of expression, understanding of similarities and differences between languages, and perception of linguistic nuances. These translation activities should be seen as a separate curriculum activity, NOT as a methodology for teaching language skills (to be done in English as far as possible).
- F) Interdisciplinary Topics : topics and materials appropriate for interdisciplinary study in Literature, History, Science, etc. Each should include background on the topic, source of materials in English, suggested independent and group activities, follow-up possibilities, etc.

2) Such Units and Activities should be developed by teachers, based on activities already in use as well as on other materials available from outside sources. English teachers should meet regularly to pool and select ideas and organize materials. Organization of such meetings, ordering and paying for additional materials, and the ultimate editing and printing of the Units and Activities should be the responsibility of the Department for Gifted Children.

3) Interdisciplinary Curriculum Workshops should be arranged periodically to allow subject area teachers to exchange ideas and to create a common basis for interdisciplinary treatment of topics within the Curriculum. These Workshops should produce materials to be made available to other teachers and develop proposals for school-wide interdisciplinary activities.

4) Serious consideration should be given to the creation of a special Bagrut examination to be used with gifted students in special classes, based on the unique abilities of these students and their particular curricular experiences, possibly to be completed at the eleventh grade.

5) Serious consideration should also be given to changing the evaluation system within the special classes to one based on specification of *achievements* rather than on numerical or descriptive grades over specified time periods.

6) English should be taught to special classes beginning in Grade 3. The question of continuation through Grade 12 should be determined on the basis

of an implemented comprehensive curriculum. Possible approaches include the following :

A) treating the senior year as a year of advanced systematic study at a University equivalency level ;

B) treating it as a year for enrichment and special topics ;

C) offering a twelfth Grade English elective at an advanced level, covering such areas as linguistics, creative writing, literature, etc. ;

D) arranging for students to use their senior year as a year of supervised University study, taking courses in areas of their own choosing under the supervision of the high school principal ;

E) completing all formal studies within the special class framework at the end of Grade 11 and allowing students to enter University or other post-high school experience one year early.

(Editor's note : readers are referred to ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL, No. 26 [January 1982] for articles on "Teachers' Experiences in Teaching Gifted Children". The above "Proposal" was drawn up after a meeting of the Committee for Teaching English to Gifted Children, under the auspices of the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education. Teachers are invited to comment.)

7. USING DRAMA TO TEACH ENGLISH :

I: ENGLISH THROUGH DRAMA IN THE ISRAELI CLASSROOM

by Patti Golan, Boyer School, Jerusalem

Most of us have used dramatic techniques in our classrooms. We may not have called them such. We use these techniques, however, every time we ask our students to act out parts in a play, or improvise on a given situation, or even give dramatic presentations of material ourselves. There may be spontaneous interaction in English during a lesson, or the teacher may provoke a reaction that is in itself a dramatic event. However interesting these moments may be, most of the students in the class are observers (if the teacher is lucky) and are not directly involved in the event — that dramatic event which produces language.

We are constantly searching for ways to stimulate and provoke, to interest the students enough so they will want to communicate. In a way, though, our efforts are a trap, because any activity which really stimulates the students into wanting to communicate verbally can backfire in a monolingual classroom. Few of us are blessed with such highly motivated classes that children can be relied on to interrelate in English only, no matter what the difficulties.

Of course, in a language lab situation, everyone in the class is participating in the language-producing activity. In the safety of one's cubicle, the student will speak imitatively into the tape recorder when he would ordinarily be too frightened to speak aloud when others are listening. But there is no interaction in the language lab, and in any case, very few schools are blessed with such equipment.

So-called communication games are one way to arouse interest enough to actively want to verbalize. The basic principle behind any communication game is that there exists a gap in information. One person, or group, knows something the other does not, and the information must be gleaned through asking questions and negotiating through language.

Three popular and entertaining examples come to mind, employing first the teacher and the whole class, then pairs, and finally groups. The teacher marches down the center of the classroom showing a large picture to one half of the class. What is it? The half that has not seen the picture must ask questions of the half that has. In another exercise, index cards with pictures of places are distributed to pairs. One of the partners of the pair must ask the other questions to determine where the place is. In a group activity, maps are distributed to several groups and tasks are assigned, e.g., locate an ideal site for a bonfire. Different groups receive different bits of information, and representatives must be sent out to gather the missing information.

These are only three examples of an enormous body of a largely untapped source of stimulating exercises that promote communication. (The best book, in my opinion, for communication games is *Games for Language Learning* by Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, Cambridge.) Yet there is a drawback for those who teach in monolingual classes. With the exception of the most tightly teacher-controlled activities, the very nature of these games tempts the use of Hebrew — the language the students naturally share. And here is where, I believe, real drama exercises differ from communication exercises. Properly managed, drama exercises offer no "escape". If done correctly, that is, sensitively, and with an eye to the "risk factor" problem, there is no way a student can avoid participating. The dynamic of the situation is such that the student is almost propelled into both producing and reproducing language.

Using dramatic techniques to teach English as a foreign language, then, is not such a novel idea. A systematic technique, however, has, to my knowledge, only been worked out in the past few years. By a lucky coincidence of events, Mark Rittenberg, who is associated with the University of San Francisco, was called upon to apply his knowledge of exercises used in drama schools to the language classrooms. What began as an experiment in 1977 with classes of socially-disadvantaged pupils in Hari Yehuda School near Jerusalem has since developed in San Francisco to a teacher-training center called "The North

American Center for Active Learning Through Drama", which is currently running some 25 workshops throughout the United States. The workshops, which range from three days to three weeks, are designed to train and develop the teacher. What practical use this training has is ultimately up to the individual teacher and class situation.

Many of the exercises taught in ETD workshops have been adapted from Viola Spolin's work in teaching drama, and can be found, in a different form, in her book *Improvisations for the Theatre*. Jacqueline Kronboy, also a teacher of dramatic techniques, provided another starting-off point. Of course, with a different aim in view, the techniques have been re-worked.

For the purposes of this article, the term "drama" refers to an activity in which the focus is on the *doing*, rather than the presentation. Drama is concerned with the world of pretending, whether the character has been suggested from an outside source, or from the player himself. What all drama exercises have in common, perhaps, is a certain rhythm which controls the tension inevitably arising from any performance situation.

Some teachers insist that drama work, of a certain type, is a good solution for the large class. When there is a presentation by a few of the students, the others are so interested in what their fellows are about to say (perhaps sadistically!) that they are gripped by the action. Certainly, when there are specific role-playing activities, once the class has been divided into groups there really is full involvement. This, however, takes great powers of organizing on the part of the teacher, and demands a certain trust on the part of the students.

Another claim for the use of drama in the classroom is that shy and inhibited students often "come-out" during role-playing, since the role they assume provides a sort of mask behind which they feel comparatively safe. This may be true, but again, I must emphasize that, in general, getting to this stage is a gradual process — a process particularly of building trust and self-confidence.

To give some examples, then, of English through drama! In introducing dramatic techniques to the classroom, the students' confidence, both in themselves and in the teacher, must be built up gradually. One always feels safer seated, for some reason, so most of the introductory exercises are done while seated in a circle.

The Name Game: This is an activity for all levels, and a useful icebreaker. The only requirement of the students is to say each other's names in a particular rhythm, gradually adding all the names of those sitting in the circle. The teacher sets the rhythm by clapping. (When the students know each other already, they can take on the names of famous people.)

The Circle of Feelings: This is a variation of The Name Game. Also tied to a rhythm established by the teacher, each student gives a feeling or emotive

adjective, with its associated tone of voice and a body movement to go along with the word. Let's say the teacher begins the exercise with the word "angry". The word is pronounced vehemently at the same time that the teacher slams one fist into the other hand. Everyone then repeats the word and motion. The next student repeats "angry" and then adds "unhappy", with an appropriate gesture. Everyone then repeats "angry" and "unhappy". The third student begins by saying "angry", "unhappy", and then adds "tired". The entire circle repeats from the beginning, and soon. The teacher never lets the rhythm or the energy level drop.

The Hype-Up: Students work in small groups with the teacher who gives an incomplete statement that the students will complete. Each person says just one word, fast following on the student before. The point of this exercise is to keep the sentence moving as long as possible. The students are forced to listen to each other carefully, since any person's solution to the incomplete sentence will be changed by the person standing next to him or her. The line of students can be anywhere from two to twenty, with anyone being interchangeable at the teacher's direction.

Back to Back: The classroom must be cleared. Everyone walks around while observing what everyone else is wearing. When the music stops, the teacher puts the students in pairs back to back. One person must describe the other's clothes. This is done by questions and answers, e.g., "You're wearing a sweater. Yes, but what color and what kind?" Once again the students are asked to walk around and observe each other, but the next time couples are formed, each student will be asked to assume the identity of his or her partner. The final phase of this exercise has each one describe himself as if he is the partner.

A more sophisticated use of taking on one another's identities is to ask everyone to interview another person. The student is asked what he is planning to do that weekend, or what his favorite activities are. Students are then asked to tell the group about the other person. The fact that it is someone else being described somehow tends to eliminate embarrassment.

Transfer: The students stand in two straight lines facing each other. The teacher, who is at the beginning of one of the lines, mimes an action, for example, "waving", and then says "I'm waving". The teacher then "transfers" this action to the student standing opposite. The student repeats the action and word, but then modifies it in whatever way is desired, adding the appropriate words. For example, the student may lift his arm from a wave, mop his brow then say "I'm hot". This is then "transferred" to the student opposite, next in line, who then takes up "I'm hot", and modifies it. Obviously, if the language and gestures are not correctly paired the teacher must correct.

Pro-Con: This exercise demands a certain level of linguistic competence. (It's an excellent exercise for native-speaker classes.) The student is called upon to stand up in front of the class and speak extemporaneously for and against a given topic. The speaker is given a particular subject to talk about. Each time the teacher claps (about every 10-15 seconds) the student must change to the opposite view — from being "pro-something" to being "con" a subject. Given the pressure of time, the student usually forgets to worry about making mistakes. If the student gets stuck, the teacher can ask directed questions to get him going again.

For warm-ups that never fail, I am personally fond of songs, particularly those songs whose rhyme schemes and repetitive melodies lend themselves to word improvisation and action. This type of song fits very nicely in the category of drama exercises.

Let us take as an example that old party game, often played in Hebrew, "I have a hobby". When done in pairs within the larger circle, using gestures, the results can be hilarious. But there are other, less flamboyant songs, that can be used as jumping off points for generating new sentences. Most spirituals, with their repetitive lines and predictable melodies, can be played.

At this point I anticipate the inevitable question regarding the place of correction in all this. There is by no means a clear consensus on this problem in even the most conventional of language lessons. One inspector will criticize the teacher for not correcting a student on the spot. Another will vehemently insist that a student never be interrupted mid-sentence, particularly once the student has had the courage to start speaking. In general, I would say that once students are involved in a particular drama activity and have achieved a momentum in communication, any interruption would be counter-productive. It is also certainly true that in any exercise involving repetition, a teacher cannot allow a faulty structure to be repeated by others. Somewhere, as in everything, there is a happy medium. Once the classroom is upbeat and happy, once there is self-confidence, and above all, mutual respect, correction of errors is an obvious and natural component of the lesson.

The exercises described above are only a few examples of activities which can be almost endlessly modified, depending on the teacher's goals. I have not even begun to describe the wide range of drama exercises that lend themselves to use in the foreign language classroom. It should be clear that what all these exercises have in common is that (done energetically and correctly) they involve the entire class's active participation. There can be no hiding or withdrawal. All the students are forced, by virtue of the tempo and the game-like nature of these activities, to take part.

Is there anyone teaching today who doubts the importance of classroom atmosphere? And as our emphasis in teaching English has gradually shifted towards communication skills and oral competency, the benefits gained from integrating drama techniques into the language teaching program are enormous. For a start, the exercises themselves require group cooperation and interaction, and thus they become a means for building group support and trust among the students. By moving gradually from "low-risk situations" (e.g., everyone sitting on chairs, and not being called upon to do anything different from the group) to "high-risk situations" (e.g., being called upon to deliver a monologue off-the-cuff) most students will be able to expand their range of communication skills. The self-confidence gained from this process is, I think, immeasurable.

One *objective* test of the results of this build-up of confidence, however, is the Ilyin Oral Interview (Newbury House Publishers). This is an objective measure of oral skills in a testing situation of one examiner to one student. When this test was administered to foreign students learning English in California, students who had done English through drama techniques as part of their curriculum did impressively better after only three months in the exam than did their counterparts in "non-drama" classes.

There are those teachers who can walk into a new class cold, and by virtue of their personalities, activate the class into freely participating in all sorts of activities. This may be due, in part, to the novelty of the situation. Most of us, however, do need some special training to carry it off.

Mark Rittenberg, who has been conducting teacher training workshops in *English Through Drama*, which he and Penny Kreitzer have developed, rejects the idea that any teacher can employ drama techniques in the classroom without any special training. I tend to agree with this. To judge from the wealth of books on the market nowadays dealing with drama in language learning, all one need do is master a few tricks to stimulate one's students into new heights of enthusiastic communication.

This is, in my opinion, deceptive nonsense. Just as not everyone can be a teacher, not everyone can use dramatic techniques. It is, in some ways, a matter of temperament, but, and this is the important point, it is also a matter of specialized training. One has to develop one's *own* abilities and dramatic potential, as well as organizing skills, before one can competently lead a class.

The *application* of any of these drama exercises or games, as I stated before, is completely up to each individual teacher according to the needs of the class. Whether a specific need be vocabulary drill or understanding a literary text, the teacher must be the one to ultimately pick and choose, and then adapt what has been learned in a workshop or through books. One might think that I am stating the obvious, but time and again I have either observed or participated in demonstrations of *English Through Drama*, in which, before anyone

has even begun to catch on to what the whole business is about, teachers start objecting to the lack of suitability in this situation or that. My point here is that, like learning any new skill, one works through the *models* oneself first.

I would personally like to see one teacher, trained in dramatic techniques, in every school. Since the 40-odd classroom, standard in today's urban school, limits one's possibilities in this area drastically, once a week the regular teacher could take half the class, while the "drama teacher" works with the other half. Another possibility for dividing the class might be to send one group of students to the library for individual work, or, if your school is fortunate enough to have one, to the special English workshop room. A Utopian dream perhaps, in these days of educational cutbacks!

There are at least a dozen books available on the local market with titles that suggest ways of using dramatic techniques in the classroom. Most of these titles are, in my opinion, misnomers. What most of the books offer is a combination of language games, communication activities and party tricks. Not, I hasten to add, that there is anything wrong with games — or with anything, for that matter, that can successfully activate the classroom. And surely, if the students are enjoying themselves (and having fun in English) that in itself is no mean achievement. I do think, however, that the teacher ought to be wary of trying out any new techniques without being adequately prepared himself. Drama workshops are not always available to the teacher, and getting ideas from books, no doubt, is better than getting no ideas at all.

Here follows, then, a brief list of the more notable books available. I should stress, however, that my own feeling is that most of the ideas presented in these books are for advanced students, and again assume an ability of the teacher that may not be there.

Drama Techniques in Language Learning by Alan Maley and Alan Duff, Cambridge.

This pair of authors is well known to veteran Israeli English teachers, particularly for their marvellous workshops. The book has several good suggestions and interesting activities, but of the 60-odd suggestions, only about ten are really drama exercises.

Drama in Language Teaching by Susan Holden, Longmans.

This is a rather dry, theoretical text for teachers. Many good ideas for improvisations and how to use text books as points of departure for drama improvisations.

Act English by Peter Watcyn-Jones, Penguin Books.

This comes with another book of detachable cardboard role cards, which you can easily make yourself. A situation is set and a role assigned and — well,

take it from there. The introduction has a rather good argument for role-playing versus conversation. Not all the roles are ones our students will be able to relate to.

Play Your Part by Gaynor Ramsy, Longman.

Again, role-playing based on given situations. The Instructions to the teacher are good, but most of the subjects are, I feel, unsuitable for Israeli schoolchildren.

Get Up and Do It! by James Dixey and Mario Rinvoluti, Longman.

This book is impossible to use without the Teacher's Book, which has, incidentally, an excellent introduction. The mime and short sketches are very good, although the sketches oriented towards particular structures seem rather complicated to carry out. The students' text is very amusing and has cute cartoons.

USING DRAMA TO TEACH ENGLISH:

II. REHEARSING AND PERFORMING IMPROVISED PLAYLETS IN GRADES FIVE AND SIX

by Lenny Ravich, Inspector, Northern District

A project which has been in progress for the past few years in the North, especially in Tiberias, is teaching English via drama exercises. Getting children to rehearse parts in short, improvised playlets without the burden of learning written scripts, has been one of the additional accomplishments in presenting an English Day wherein each class of the same school performs a playlet for other classes. This goal has been successfully achieved in several schools in Nazareth Elite.

The teacher begins by narrating a simple story, allowing the pupils to raise their fingers to ask questions when a word or phrase is not understood. Many of these new words are repeated often enough so that the raised fingers become fewer and fewer. Some Hebrew is used to clarify points. Much pantomime is involved to hold attention. Thus, the teacher first tells the story, acting out the parts in character. The tenses past, conditional and future are used to a minimum presenting very little confusion, if any.

The teacher: "In a little house in the forest live an old man and an old woman. (The teacher acts out being old, bent and, if possible, no teeth, to the amusement of the class). The old man says, 'This house is dirty'. The old woman says, 'Yes, the house is very dirty. But I'm too old and tired to clean it. I'm going to sleep'. 'Yes', says the old man, 'I'm going to sleep too'."

"So they go to sleep. (The teacher pantomimes sleeping). At night, little dwarfs come and look through the window. Now little dwarfs only come out at night because if someone sees them, they will go away and never, never, never come back. The dwarfs look through the window and say (teacher imitates high-pitched voice, somewhat like a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ recording on 45 speed): 'This house is dirty. Let's clean it'. So they come in very quietly (teacher on tiptoe, demonstrating extreme quiet) and begin cleaning the hall, the floor, the wall (teacher continues pantomime), and the door, in separate groups. Each group sings its duty. First group of dwarfs: 'We're cleaning the hall'. Second: 'We're cleaning the floor'. Third: 'We're cleaning the wall!' Fourth: 'We're cleaning the door'."

"The sun shines through the window and all the dwarfs say, 'Look! The sun is shining. Let's go!' And they quietly leave the house".

"The old man and old woman wake up (teacher pantomimes) and find the house clean. 'Look. The house is clean!' says the old woman. 'Yes, the house is very clean!' says the old man. 'Who was here?' asks the old woman. 'I don't know', answers the old man. 'Tonight, I want to sleep with one eye open and one eye closed. (Teacher pantomimes this) I want to see who is cleaning my house!' says the old woman".

"So the old man and old woman go to sleep again. (The entire dwarfs' entrance should be reenacted the second time as in the first scene for the sake of repetition of new words, business etc. The story then continues.) The old man and old woman wake up. The old woman says, 'Look. The house is clean again'. 'Yes. The house is clean again. Who was here?' asks the old man. 'I know', answers the old woman. 'They are dwarfs. They have old clothes. I want to sew new clothes for them'. The old man says, 'No. No. If they see the new clothes they will go away and never come back'. 'I don't care', says the old lady. 'They have old clothes. I want them to have new clothes'."

"So all day the old man and woman sew new clothes for the dwarfs. (Teacher pantomimes sewing) They leave the new clothes on the table for the dwarfs and go to sleep. At night, the dwarfs come in quietly. They see the new clothes and say, 'Let's take the new clothes and never, never, never come back. So they take the clothes and run away".

"In the morning, the old woman wakes up and is happy that the dwarfs have new clothes. The old man wakes up and cries. 'Why are you crying?' asks the old woman. And the old man answers, 'Because the dwarfs will never, never, never come back again'."

This narration and pantomime should take approximately fifteen minutes. The teacher is now ready to repeat part of the story using the Cloze method, leaving out a word from each sentence and requiring the class to supply it.

E.g., "An old man and an ——— woman live in the forest". The same sentence may be repeated leaving out different words each time. Other phrases from the story are treated the same way until the teacher is sure of the pupils' ability to cope with the new words and phrases.

This should take from five to ten minutes. Now the various parts may be offered to volunteers. The main characters are the old couple, but the entire class might act out different groups of dwarfs with various tasks, business, songs and dialogue.

This time the teacher narrates while the pupils pantomime. The teacher coaxes the actors into saying their lines. If the actors have trouble with this, the teacher simply recites the line and the players repeat it; several times, if necessary. The teacher should be open to any new business or improvisations on the part of the players. The dwarfs might speak and sing chorally, with high-pitched voices, repeating their lines after the teacher has first pronounced them. This portion should take about fifteen minutes, leaving a few moments at the end of the lesson for discussion of the playlet and to request the class's permission to rehearse the playlet for a performance at a future date.

The choice of suitable playlets to be rehearsed and performed is endless. Selected material may be gathered from children's story books and adapted for use in the class in improvised play form. New, imaginary playlets can be developed with pupils adding characters and plot, under the teacher's guidance. An example of this was an improvisation evoked from a Grade Four class concerning a little kitten who had lost her mother and proceeded to seek help from other barnyard animals, in finding her way home.

Each regular lesson could either begin or end with a five to ten minute rehearsal of a chosen playlet, offering a convenient warm-up or a pleasant closing to the English lesson. The motivation is increased since the pupils are in preparation for a performance as well as being aware of other classes rehearsing different playlets and/or songs to to be offered on the same English Day. Costumes may also be added to heighten morale.

This approach to teaching English via improvised drama in Grades Five and Six adds a new dimension to the regular English lesson, keeping spirits and attention high in giving the pupils the opportunity to rehearse and perform in English without having to know how to read.

(See also "Letters to the Editor" in this issue.)

USING DRAMA TO TEACH ENGLISH :

III. DRAMA IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING FROM A PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

by Susan L. Stern, University of California, Los Angeles
(reprinted with permission from *Language Learning* 30, 1)

Drama is commonly used in ESL, and foreign language classes for developing communicative competence, especially oral language skills. Whether or not they use it themselves, most instructors would agree that drama, particularly role-play, is a standard classroom technique which "has long been recognized as a valuable and valid means of mastering a language." (Hines 1973 : Introduction)

It is not the purpose of this paper, however, to discuss dramatic techniques or argue for their usefulness. The intuitive assumption that drama in the ESL/foreign language classroom improves oral communication is taken as a given for this study, which approaches drama in L2 learning from a psycholinguistic perspective. The question to be explored is : Presuming that participation in dramatic activities helps L2 learners improve their communicative competence, how can this be explained in psycholinguistic terms, i.e., which psychological factors can explain why dramatic activities appear to improve the oral competence of L2 learners ?

In answering this question, practical application of drama in education and related fields were explored, beginning with ESL and foreign language classes. Any area that could illustrate the psychological basis of drama as a means of achieving a personal goal was investigated. Research revealed three such areas : Drama in education, specifically in language classes ; Psycho-drama, as practiced in the mental health field and in professional training programs ; and Role-playing in speech therapy.

The objectives for using drama are different for each of these disciplines. In ESL and foreign language classes, drama is directed toward language acquisition. In child development, creative dramatics encourages the maturation and growth of creative capacity, with particular reference to verbal skills. Psycho-drama helps restore a patient's mental health and trains individuals for new social roles. Speech therapy employs drama to help patients achieve or regain normal speech behavior and patterns.

Despite their differing aims, each of these disciplines appears to use drama for the same fundamental reason : it facilitates communication by bringing certain psychological factors into play which elicit the desired behavior in the individual. The common factors are : motivation, empathy, sensitivity to rejection,

self-esteem, and spontaneity. All but spontaneity are currently being investigated within the context of L2 acquisition (Schumann 1975). The focus of the present study is the insight these factors provide into the psychological effects of drama. The goal is to understand how and why participation in dramatic activities helps L2 learners achieve communicative competence.

The paper begins with a discussion of the relationship between drama and each of these psychological factors within the frameworks of the three disciplines mentioned above. Implications for L2 learners are suggested throughout the discussion, leading to a statement of the hypothesis. The report of an informal exploratory study designed to find support for the claims made by the hypothesis concludes the paper.

DRAMA IN EDUCATION ESL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Motivation

Motivation is the most frequently cited reason for using drama in ESL and foreign language classes. Dramatic activities inspire students to want to learn another language. They are a curative for the frustration and lagging interest which often occur during L2 learning, and they facilitate acquisition of the target language as a result (Hsu 1975, Via 1976, Moulding 1978).

The purposefulness of dramatic activity can provide a strong instrumental motivation for language learning. In an intermediate level class in spoken Chinese for American university students, for example, Hsu (1975) conducted an experiment in drama to develop the students' conversational ability and boost their sinking morale. She structured the entire course around presentation of a play, making it a group project that required students to communicate in Chinese throughout each aspect of preparation. Hsu found the activity to be highly motivating to her students, reactivating a high degree of interest in learning Chinese. Via (1976) also found play production as the culmination of a language course to be highly motivating to students when teaching English in Japan. Functioning as an end in itself as well as a topic for discussion and analysis, play production created a genuine communication need where students had to use natural conversational English in a meaningful context.

Play production can also be a source of integrative motivation by fostering cultural proximity. A play allows language learners to participate in the new culture, helping them develop a sensitivity as to how speakers of the target language interact with each other. It familiarizes them with the cultural appropriateness of words and expressions to specific settings and social situations.

Ideally, this integrative experience should motivate learners to want to achieve a higher degree of language proficiency.

Moulding (1978) emphasized that drama provides the context for a meaningful exchange in which participants see a reason to communicate, and focuses on "how to do things" with the language rather than merely on "how to describe things". Maley and Duff (1978) explained that language teaching has tended to kill motivation by divorcing the intellectual aspects of language (vocabulary + structures) from its body and emotions, limiting instruction to the former. Dramatic techniques restore the body and emotions to language, thereby restoring motivation.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is an evaluation we make of ourselves and our abilities in terms of worthiness, and "specific self-esteem" is a self-evaluation particular to a specific life situation (Heyde 1977). Although this term rarely appears in TESL literature in reference to drama, the frequently cited concept of "self-confidence" seems to have the same meaning. Thus, for purpose of this study, "self-confidence" in L2 learning is synonymous with specific self-esteem — the learner's self-esteem as a speaker of the second language.

Heyde (1979) found that there appears to be a predictive quality to the correlation between self-esteem and the ability to orally produce a second language. Results indicate that students with high self-esteem received higher teacher oral production ratings than low self-esteem students. This implies that increased specific self-esteem should improve the language learner's oral proficiency. Advocates of drama in L2 learning support this hypothesis and believe that an effective way of raising self-esteem is via drama.

An analogy between acting and the martial arts suggested by Via (1976) explains one way in which drama helps self-confidence. Just as a yell accompanies the strike in order to build the confidence and increase the energy of the attacker, so a strong and clear voice (necessary when performing) gives the language learner confidence. Drama also raises self-esteem by demonstrating to L2 learners that they are indeed capable of expressing themselves in realistic communicative situations.

Sensitivity to rejection

L2 learners who are afraid of what others may think of their less-than-perfect command of the language will be inhibited in using it. This is especially true of adults. Several educators have found that drama creates a non-threatening situation which can reduce and even eliminate sensitivity to rejection (Hines 1973, Via 1976, Early 1977, Crookall 1978).

There are a number of possible explanations for the safety of the role-play situation. One is that it is only make-believe, and the learner needn't fear "the consequences of a lapse or miscalculation". (Early 1977:34) The role shields learners against the less desirable consequences of their assertions, and their assertions thereby become freer (Crookall 1978:2). A second explanation is that drama functions as a group effort, giving safety through numbers. A third is that critical judgment of what the participants say — and even how they say it — may be perceived by them as being directed toward the characters they are portraying rather than toward them personally. Consequently, they lose their normal inhibitions about speaking "...relax, forget, become the characters they are portraying, and language flows". (Hines 1973:Introduction)

According to Via (1976), play acting is a natural activity of children, and their lack of inhibition shows them when unobserved to engage in award-winning performances. For the adult, to revive this innate ability is just a matter of rediscovery. Peck (1977) observed that children immersed in an L2 situation with native-speaking children will join them in play. Unfamiliarity with the second language does not seem to inhibit their involvement; on the contrary, they begin to use it themselves.

These observations, coupled with the generally accepted belief that children have the natural ability to acquire a second language, lead to some exciting speculations about drama as a strategy in adult L2 learning. If role-play can temporarily revive "the child" in adult L2 learners, then the child's natural ability to acquire a second language might also be revived to some extent.

Empathy

The empathic act is "a temporary suspension of ego functions in favor of an immediate precognitive experience of another's emotional state as one's own;... a process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self-object boundaries... permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the effective experience of another". (Guiora 1972:142) Guiora explains that empathic capacity is dependent upon the ability to partially and temporarily suspend the functions that maintain one's separateness from others (usually called ego boundaries); i.e., to partially and temporarily give up one's separateness of identity. Flexibility, or permeability of ego boundaries, is the index of one's ability to take on a new identity.

Actors must achieve empathy, or ego permeability, in order to give a convincing and meaningful performance. Stanislavski believed that they must pretend to live out the lives of their characters in ways that transcend the play. They must enter their characters' consciousness by temporarily giving up their own identity to take on a new dimension. A common training procedure for

actors is to identify with their characters or wish they were them, and then imagine what they would do (Beutler 1976). Supporting the notion that drama fosters empathy in the participants, educators such as Shafien and Shafiel (1952) have found that role-play is a successful approach for forming positive intergroup relations because it permits the individual to understand and relate to the feelings of others.

It is therefore hypothesized that dramatic activities are an effective way of creating within the classroom setting that "concatenation of natural factors" which could make permeability of ego boundaries possible for everyone. If "the natural factors which induce ego flexibility and lower inhibitions are those conditions which make the learner less anxious, make him feel accepted and make him form positive identification with speakers of the target language" (Schumann 1975:227); and if drama is one of those natural factors that induce flexibility and lower inhibitions, then one more explanation as to why drama is an effective technique in L2 learning will have been found.

(Editor's note: Part II of this article, dealing with *PSYCHODRAMA, DRAMATICS IN SPEECH THERAPY, AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS FOR USING DRAMA IN LANGUAGE TEACHING* will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL [ISRAEL]*).

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8. MY YOUNG POETS: COMMENTS ON TEACHING POP SONGS

by Shulamit Cohen, Aran School, Holon

When it comes to teaching songs at primary schools I usually prefer folk songs; however, I sometimes choose to teach Pop songs as well. I must admit I like both kinds — folk songs for their everlasting qualities but Pop songs since I was raised to their tunes.

I have heard much criticism of the teaching of Pop songs, which (compared with folk songs) have often been regarded as "junk". In this way it was implied that teaching Pop songs might contradict the educational objective of elevating our pupils from the corrupting atmosphere that such "terrible" music must certainly have created around them.

I can easily understand the critics of Pop songs; in most cases, these songs have nothing valuable to convey to our pupils. The words sung by the screaming bands are often meaningless, creating nothing but stock responses. The theme is well-known to every youngster: either I love you and I am the happiest man in the world since you love me in return, or I love you but I am in hopeless despair since you do not return my love any more. The imagery in these Pop songs is too often merely banal. In fact, Pop songs fail to convey any original or imaginative idea beyond the stimulating music.

Still, teenagers love Pop songs and spend many hours listening and dancing to their tunes. Furthermore, Pop songs have long been identified as a youth symbol, by teenagers all over the world. Hence, a teacher will find it hard to ignore the role that Pop songs play in their pupils' lives.

I have suggested above that the question whether to present a few Pop songs during the year is a controversial one. But so is the question whether to take our pupils only to museums or to slums and hospitals as well. I assume that there are teachers who believe that school should stand as a symbol only for all our "elevated values", but I personally believe that school should concentrate less on symbols and get more involved in the pupils' own world.

The reality surrounding the teenager must, to some extent, be reflected in the content-matter of the lessons. Otherwise, teaching will eventually stand as glamorous and detached as the towered Camelot in Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott".

There are a number of additional reasons for teaching Pop songs at schools: in particular, teaching Pop songs is fun. After long hours of hard work and tests, singing these songs is obviously a means of relief from all the tension. Added to this is the sense of togetherness that is achieved between the pupils and the teacher. In this atmosphere of togetherness, the teaching of Pop songs may in particular contribute to establish a better understanding between the teacher and a pupil from a disadvantaged neighbourhood, for whom Pop music plays a particularly important role.

A teacher may also notice that the spontaneous enthusiasm for Pop music is, to some extent, rather controlled in the presence of the teacher in class. I believe that if the "grown-ups" take an active interest in the teenager's world, they may be far more helpful in coping with the negative aspects that a deep and even fanatical identification with these youth symbols might develop, on the part of these pupils.

Moreover, Pop songs may be used for creative writing. For example, a teacher may ask the pupils to write a poem that would have the same theme as a Pop song but would have the qualities of an individual, imaginative and sincere creation, as I found with my Grade 7 class, described below.

My Young Poets and "Xanadu"

I consider most of my pupils to be writers and poets, as most of them are able to express themselves in creative writing. My pupils are usually urged to write short compositions on various topics discussed in class. Much of their brilliant intellect is reflected in those compositions. And yet, I do not think I could have reached the depth of their inner world without our mutual experience with "Xanadu".

"Xanadu" is known to many pupils as the popular "hit" song by the famous Olivia Newton-John. As a teacher who loves teaching "Pop" songs, I definitely could not miss that one at the first sight of my pupils dancing to its tune during their breakfast break. I recorded the song, as I usually do. (My pupils sometimes bring their own records and cassettes.) Before playing the tape, I decided to devote a few minutes to the historical background of "Xanadu". I talked about Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" trying to convey a little of the vivacious beauty of that Xanadu to my pupils.

I soon found out that Coleridge's Xanadu caught the pupils' imagination. I could sense a wave of dissatisfaction passing in the classroom: the words

sung by Miss Olivia Newton-John seemed a little meaningless. At this point, I asked my pupils to write their own version of Xanadu. In fact, they were asked to write "a better song" than the one they were just singing. That "better" song" had to be more meaningful and truer, and its words had to express their own feelings more accurately and significantly.

That was the stimulation, and the response was quite amazing. I think the first thing that struck me was the fact that most of the young "poets" were pupils of rather introverted personality. This was a rare occasion in which we — the teachers — were given a glimpse into their inner world.

Furthermore, the pupils who wrote the Xanadu songs evidently participated more actively in the class discussion after their experience with this song. It seemed to me that they were quite surprised to find out that English could serve as a means for the self-expression of deep feelings and wishes. Their motivation for learning actively the language grew, discarding all other "excuses" such as "salary promotions" or "touring America" — that their parents and we so constantly promise them...

However, I cannot but keep in my mind that this is an experiment — successful as it may seem to be. I intend to continue my experiment with the songs: "Tragedy" by the Bee Gees, and "Money, Money" by Abba. Since my pupils still attend primary school, I find it important to use music as a stimulation for this particular creative writing.

Needless to say, our young poets are led by their instincts at this stage, rather than by their intensive knowledge of poetry. They are fully aware of the fact that they are just trying to write "a better song". Yet, these "better songs" are to me: a thing of beauty. And as John Keats said, it is "a joy forever".

Xanadu

"A place where nobody
hates each other
And nobody cries.
One can see smiling
faces all around.
And hear old people, as
well as young, laughing
softly together.
But this place cannot be
found on earth, because
It's too unreal!"

Orly Ben Simhot

Xanadu

"A place where every girl
has a boyfriend.
And she can walk
with him hand in hand!
You don't need to help
your mother.
You don't need to scrub
the floor.
You always go to movies
and parties.
And all your life you have
just Fun!"

Riki Kalvo

Xanadu

"A place where there are
children only.
They can fly anywhere
they like.
They don't cry. They are
always happy.
They live in peace.
The children don't learn,
and they always go on
trips.
They pick up candies
from the sea — which
is made of sweets only!
At night they play
with the moon.
When they go to sleep,
the moon sends them beautiful
dreams.
They can sleep anytime.
Their beds are made of gold!
Nobody tells them what to do!"

Ronen Dangur

Xanadu

A place where I go
When I am sad and depressed.
It is a place where all living
things smile at you, and you
smile in return.
Then you float in a spaceship
Among the stars, hovering through a
million light years and
dreaming of a
fantastic future.
Xanadu, to me, is a beautiful star
in the Galaxy, shining through its
Big silver rings to
All sad people in the world".

Moshe Levine

(Editor's note: Readers are invited to comment on the ideas expressed in this article.)

9. NEWS FROM THE INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CENTRE

Progress Report on the new series for the Upper Levels "HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE"

by Sheila Been

This project, undertaken jointly by the English Materials Construction Unit of Tel-Aviv University (ESH) and the Instructional Television Centre, is (at the time of writing) going to press with the second booklet, "OUT ON YOUR OWN". The first booklet, "ON THE MOVE", was published in October 1981. The total series will consist of five booklets, each of which constitutes the core material of a multi-media course including telecasts and audio-cassettes. The course is intended for use in the last three years of secondary school, and it is hoped that it will be especially suitable for "average-to-weak" classes.

The course represents a departure from materials previously constructed by these two institutions, since the emphasis is on communicative competence in the broadest sense rather than on structural accuracy. While it is believed that the ability to know and use the linguistic structure of the language is necessary, it is also believed that grammatical exercises are not sufficient for effective

communication. Hence this material attempts to develop an awareness of communicative functions, as well as the social and interpersonal domains without which communication cannot take place. The material differs too with respect to methodology. Whereas in previous materials learners were seen as learning through explanation, controlled practice, and eventually to creative use, in this material the learner is seen as learning through 'experiencing'; he is given tasks which require authentic use of the language to satisfy immediate communicative needs.

This methodology can be divided loosely into several stages. **Stage 1** — anticipating or predicting on the basis of knowledge of the world; for example, if the activity involves reading a newspaper article about a well-known sports figure, groups of pupils might be invited to make a list of the kinds of places where such an article might appear — a sports magazine, a feature article, the sports page of a daily newspaper, a sports encyclopaedia, a book of records, etc. Groups then compare their lists, thereby pooling their information. Then each member of a group (or each group) plays the role of the reporter of the publication of his choice and lists the questions he would ask in order to obtain the information that would be suitable for that particular publication. Again the questions are compared. This stage serves several linguistic and pedagogical purposes:

- the learner becomes aware of a need for linguistic information (either lexical or structural) which the teacher or other group members can satisfy;
- the learner practises a particular structural form (in this case, question forms) with an authentic purpose in mind;
- the learner becomes aware of different linguistic styles or registers that are appropriate for different communicative situations;
- the learner becomes familiar with both linguistic and content features that he is likely to encounter in the text;
- learners learn to listen to and learn from each other;
- the learner is provided with a purpose for reading the text.

Stage 2 — *tackling the activity itself*: for example, pupils are invited to read the article in order to find out a) which of their predicted questions are answered, b) what kind of publication the article appeared in. This stage reinforces many of the linguistic elements introduced in Stage 1 and provides an authentic reading activity.

Stage 3 — *drawing conclusions about language*: in this particular activity, pupils can now make generalizations about the different writing genres and about different kinds of content that are appropriate for different purposes.

Stage 4 — (Optional) — developing language competence

Based on the teacher's diagnosis of the learner's needs and an awareness by the learners themselves of particular weaknesses at any time during the activity, controlled practice of particular linguistic forms can be introduced. (Since these needs cannot be predicted in advance explicit grammatical exercises are not provided — exercises of this nature are readily available in a variety of sources.)

Stage 5 (optional) — going beyond the text: for example, in this activity other articles can be read and compared with the first. Oral interviews can be conducted and then reported on orally or in writing.

This methodology is generally applicable to all activities provided — although the main focus of each activity varies. In some cases the main focus is on talking, in some listening, in others reading or writing. But it is important to note that most activities involve an integration of skills.

The above, then, is an outline of the principles on which the course is constructed. While we believe that these principles are sound, we are nevertheless aware of many problems that still have to be overcome. Perhaps the two most crucial problems are ATTITUDES TO LEARNING and EVALUATION.

Attitudes to Learning

A number of teachers have already begun to use ON THE MOVE. In all fairness it must be stated that experience shows that all new materials are difficult to adjust to. However, general feedback indicates that most pupils enjoy working with the material. On the other hand, some pupils felt that it did not involve "serious learning"; it was the icing on the cake. How can one overcome prevailing attitudes that learning must be painful in order to be efficient? We believe that the best answer to this lies in proof — an adequate evaluation instrument which both demonstrates to the learner that he is making progress and that he fares at least equally with peers who use other material. This brings us to the problem of evaluation.

Evaluation

What kind of evaluation instruments can be designed to test progress, achievement or proficiency? What kind of instruments can be designed to test the validity of the approach? The material sets out to develop learning processes rather than the acquisition of particular language items or "products". Yet all conventional measuring instruments focus on "products". Furthermore, how can one test general communicative ability in a way that is both objective and economically implementable? And finally, how can we design tests which will offer a fair comparison between approaches? All these questions will have to be answered soon.

Conclusion

In the meantime, the project is continuing. We hope to have four units available during the academic year 1982/83 and the complete course of five units in 1983/84. During this period we plan to hold many seminars which should provide valuable feedback and suggestions to the team, on the one hand, and a deeper understanding of how to use the material in the classroom on the other. As always, we rely on our teachers for support, encouragement and objective criticism.

"HERE WE ARE" — THE SIXTH GRADE TELEVISION SERIES "TAILORING" THE SERIES — IS IT POSSIBLE ?

by *Tsafi Ben-Shachar* with *Dvora Ben Meir* and *Zionah Kronfeld*

Last year, when my hours of English in Grade 6 were cut down from four to three weekly hours, I was faced with the necessity of finding ways to "cram" the material of the "*Here We Are*" programme (which under normal conditions provides more material than many classes can cope with) into three-quarters of the usually allotted time. "Necessity is the mother of invention", the proverb says. My necessity, I am sorry to say, did not create an "invention" but it did force me to sit down and formulate certain ideas which had been at the back of my mind throughout my years of experience both as a teacher and as a counsellor.

I was faced with a problem. How could I resolve it? Should my decision be to continue viewing all the telecasts broadcast in the series in a superficial manner or should I choose selected telecasts and utilize them more intensively? The answer to this problem will probably vary according to each teacher and to the needs of each group of learners. My decision was based on the fact that I felt that the telecasts offered my pupils maximum exposure to native-spoken English in natural and motivating situations and that this exposure was essential to the learning process. Despite this fact, I also realized that it was impossible to deal intensively with every situation in every telecast. Fortunately, the solution to this problem lay in the format of the series — various segments and situations dealing with the same grammatical structure in different ways. I could therefore choose the situations in each telecast relevant to my pupils' needs, interests, and background without depriving them of exposure to the full "dose" of authentic English. I would continue viewing *all* the telecasts, but choose only selected situations for class work. But where was I to go from here? How would I make my selection of situations?

I made a check-list of questions to ask myself regarding the selection of situations and I would like to share it and some of my answers with you.

a) Is the situation essential for the understanding of the general outline of the series?

For example, I found it essential that pupils work intensively on the situation of "*Golan's Department Store*" in Key 1, as it introduces the characters and the setting of the series; similarly, "*David Golan Sells Golan's Department Store*" in Key 11 is essential in order to follow the continuation of the series.

b) How relevant is the situation to the pupils' world? Will it appeal to their real interests?

For example, in the school in which I teach, the sixth grade pupils are responsible for the Traffic Safety Patrol. Therefore I felt that the situation "*Traffic Signs*" in Key 2, "*Traffic Rules for Bicycle Riders*" in Key 3, and "*Bicycle Safety Rules*" in Key 7 would meet the *real* needs of my pupils. Moreover, the realization of the importance of these safety rules is one of our essential educational objectives. Similarly, the situation "*Buying a Present in the Sports Department*" in Key 3 and "*Buying a Gift at an Outdoor Stand*" in Key 4 both deal with the real experience that 11 year-olds have — that of buying gifts for friends and family. This situation is also a real part of their world.

c) Will the pupils be interested in expanding the situation dealt with in the telecast?

For example, there are quite a few situations that lend themselves to creative work and for pair or group projects. Some of the situations that served as an impetus for my pupils putting in hours of extra time and work were "*Taking Pictures of the Future*" in Key 10 and "*Golan Family Album*" in Key 13. For the first situation the pupils prepared a class album of what each pupil wanted to be in the future; this was accompanied by pictures, drawings, and written texts about the pupils' choice. Similarly, the "*Golan Family Album*" situation offered the pupils a model on which to base their own "Roots" album, telling the story of their individual families in pictures and words. "*The Artist in the Park*" in Key 16 gave a chance to even the weakest pupils to participate in working on a class collage — a mural which covered an entire wall in the classroom. These examples should only whet the imagination and inspire other activities which the telecast situations lend themselves to.

d) Does the situation present the grammatical structure for the first time, or does it review a structure previously taught? Is the grammatical generalization presented as a situation my pupils can remember?

Since the first six telecasts of the series deal with structures introduced in the Fifth Grade, I felt that the telecasts did such a good job of reviewing

the structure (as in the animation showing the "flipping" of "a/an" coin) that I could spend class time more profitably by working on the situations (such as the introduction of the characters, setting and tone of the series) rather than by drilling the structure. However, Telecasts 7-9 deal with the Present Simple, which is introduced for the first time in a formal learning situation. The animated story "*Rami's Day*" in Key 7 and 8 generalized the structure so visually for the pupils, that I felt that I could use this situation for practising the structure. Similarly, the animation of "*S, What a wonderful letter*" depicted the 3 sounds of "s" on verbs in the 3rd person singular so vividly and musically, that my pupils would begin humming the tune anytime a pupil forgot to add that usually-forgotten "s" in the Present Simple. This decision to devote more time to the structure than to the situations in the telecast was made at other times during the year. However, I must admit that when teaching these structures, I kept reminding myself that my pupils would be exposed to a review of all of them in the Seventh Grade, and that I need not demand of them total mastery at this stage of the learning process. I felt it was important for them to begin to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate responses, but that I could not expect them at this stage to constantly produce correct responses in natural situations. This would demand more time and more opportunities for using the structure in a communicative rather than mechanical fashion. This leads to my final question on the check-list.

d) To what extent does the situation lend itself to communicative activities?

The need for pupils to *use language* communicatively from the very beginning of the learning process has been widely acknowledged. (See H. G. Widdowson, *Teaching Language as Communication*, Chapter 1 on Usage and Use.) Which situations in the telecasts would lend themselves to these communicative activities and offer the pupil a chance to *use* the language he is learning?

For example, I found that the situation "*At the Hotel*" in Key 17 lends itself to activities involving map reading — and the giving and following of directions. Pupils profited by working with authentic maps, deciding on a specific place, and then giving directions to their "partner" how to get there. The "partner" followed the directions, and if the "communication" was successful, the pupil would reach the place his partner had decided upon.

Another example of communicative activities was prompted by the situations involving interviews. ("*A Reporter Visits Golan's Department Store*" in Key 8, "*A Reporter Returns to Golan's Department Store*" in Key 12, and "*T.V. Interviews in the Park*" in Key 18.) These situations all lend themselves to an authentic use of questioning skills in interview situations. Pupils can ask real questions in order to either fill in a questionnaire form or to prepare a survey of other pupils' likes and dislikes, interests, family, etc.

Activities involving filling in a diary and using the information in the pupil's own diary for communicative activities such as inviting, and accepting or refusing an invitation, are a natural outcome of situations such as "*Miss Kaplan's Day at Work*" in Key 9 and "*A Reporter Returns to Golan's Department Store*" in Key 17.

I felt that I could use many of the situations as a springboard for such communicative activities. The pupils were provided with opportunities for natural communication and profit from this if not more than, then at least as much as, traditional grammar activities.

To sum up, I would like to encourage teachers who will be faced with fewer teaching hours next year. Even though it is impossible to cover the same amount of material in three hours as in four hours, I think that the challenge is one we can meet. By planning ahead, by a careful selection of situations, and by responsible decision-making based on the real needs and interests of our pupils, I think that all teachers can find ways of using the "*HERE WE ARE*" series in a creative, motivating and dynamic way.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AN EXPERIMENT THAT WORKED!

Sir,

When we teach the skills of reading and writing to pupils of Grades Four, Five and Six, we instruct them either phonically or by the global method. The vocabulary content is usually on the level of Grades One, Two and Three: this includes the pupil's environment at home and at school, the parts of the body, animals, colors, numbers, time, seasons, the days and the months of the year.

The scholastic year of 1981-1982 brought to our school (Kiryat Malachi Comprehensive Secondary School) some 120 Grade Seven pupils, of whom 70% did not know how to read or write in English. Our problem was to motivate these 84 pupils to acquire these skills without rehashing the same subjects of home and school which they had become accustomed to drilling in Primary School English lessons.

We decided to make an experiment with the *ABC TIMES*, edited by David Herman in Jerusalem (This is NOT a publicity article). We were pleasantly surprised by the reaction of the children. Many, who did not know how to read phonically or globally, suddenly found they could read words that were the same in Hebrew. This encouraged them, and, believe us, encouragement is a very important element in remedial teaching!

In the December issue of the *ABC TIMES* newspaper, the article about the Safari Park in Ramat Gan is accompanied by a large photograph of the park. The pupils identified such words as "Safari Park", "Egged Bus". The photograph and these four words aroused their curiosity and activated them to try and comprehend the complete article. They accomplished this not only by means of the interesting photograph but also by a dictionary list of the new words printed in English with their meanings in Hebrew.

We usually manage to cover three articles in every monthly issue. The method we used in class was as follows:

- a) the teacher reads each new word from the dictionary list, followed by class choral reading;
- b) the pupils are then asked to read the article silently for comprehension. This is often accompanied by excitement when the children realize that they can understand the article without the teacher's explanation or translation. Preceding this silent reading stage, the teacher should make sure that all the lexical items have been understood.
- c) the teacher reads each sentence separately, followed by class choral repetition. The purpose of this step is to ensure correct pronunciation.
- d) each pupil now reads aloud to his neighbour.

Hereafter, there are innumerable exercises used to reinforce reading comprehension, correct the pronunciation and, most important, encourage conversation. Some of these exercises are open-ended questions, fill-in words in sentences and drilling words with similar sounds.

The most important aspect of these articles is the subject-matter. First of all, they are always newsy. They tell us about political events in Israel and the world at large, and report about many events that the children are familiar with from the radio, the television and Hebrew newspapers. Many of the items found in the articles are both relevant and interesting to the pupils because the events are part of their every-day life. The articles are never boring.

The January issue of *ABC TIMES* had an article about a nine-year-old boy who saved a busload of passengers in Kfar Saba when he alerted the driver about a bomb on the bus. This article aroused special interest because the pupils were able to identify with the story. It is amazing how much pupils are ready to learn when they are highly motivated. Even our weakest pupils grasped lexical items such as "elementary", "passengers", "suddenly", words with four syllables, and were even able to reproduce the story in English!

There is a terrible lack of material for remedial teaching from Grades Seven to Twelve. We hope this experiment will be of help to other teachers.

*Tzilla Elifantz, Vera Zitoni, Elana Spector,
Kiriath Malachi*

COURSES FOR SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

Sir,

During the month of August 1981, the Department of English at Bar-Ilan University ran a course for socially-disadvantaged Grade Eleven pupils. The tutors on the course were recent graduates of the Department who were themselves non-native speakers. All the facilities of the university, including language laboratories, films, etc., were offered to the pupils. It was emphasized throughout the course that the onus was on the pupils to learn. There was virtually no frontal teaching as such. We were there to help them.

The course was very successful and I would like to take this opportunity of suggesting that other institutions with similar facilities consider running similar courses during coming vacations. The pupils certainly benefited and the occasion provided an excellent opportunity for the students to put into practice the theory they had studied.

If anyone is interested in further details I would be happy to be of assistance.

Valerie Whiteson, Coordinator of Language Courses, Bar-Ilan University

ALMOST MY WIFE (OR, IS YOUR GRAMMAR REALLY NECESSARY ?)

Sir,

We are well-acquainted with the pendulum tendency in the philosophy of English Teaching methodology, and probably in other spheres of teaching as well. While realising that this tendency is presumably inevitable, and, in all likelihood, quite a healthy phenomenon, it is well, every now and then, to stand back and take stock: is the ideal solution a synthesis of reaction and counter-reaction? Should we strike a balance between stressing grammar versus vocabulary, structure as against semantics, guided drills in contrast to free expression? Or has the time come to take a firmer stand, and to decide in favour of one against the other?

(I remember a student reading "The Open Window" by "Saki", and, assuming that the "open window" was indeed a window and not a door leading into the garden, believing, mistakenly, that the tragedy was the result of walking out of the open window — to him, clearly, an act of suicide.)

Conversations with new immigrants and tourists confirm that inadequate vocabulary impedes communication more than faulty grammar. For them, as

indeed for native speakers, חבר and תחבורה are two separate lexical items rather than grammatical variants of a common root. (Interestingly enough, in the course of the development of a language, the lexis sometimes undergoes a considerable semantic change, whereas the syntax changes very little. Cf., the words "an", "silly" and "cheer".)

It seems that if we are indeed interested in communication — i.e. understanding and being understood — in language teaching, then our concern should be more with meaning than with structure, with developing lexis than with perfecting grammar, and with encouraging free expression rather than engaging in meaningless drill.

This is certainly not to advocate the exclusion of grammar. On the contrary, by this criterion a grasp of the Passive Voice, for example, is essential for meaning and comprehension, in a way that understanding the implications of the Present Progressive is not: "he is smoking all day" and "he smokes all day" are closer in meaning than the following pair of sentences — "The Israeli sportsmen murdered at the 1972 Olympics" and "The Israeli sportsmen were murdered at the 1972 Olympics".

Similarly, "He is three dogs", while being grammatically correct, is far less acceptable than the grammatically incorrect sentence, "He have three dogs".

Unfortunately, many of the teaching materials currently in use implicitly lead the teacher on to stress grammar rather than semantics. A television unit, "The Persian Folktale", sets out to teach indirect speech in the present tense, a form which presents minimal learning difficulties, while apparently disregarding the import of the learning load imposed by the lexis in this unit.

We still see countless teaching hours being spent on details such as cut - cutting, write - writing, emphasizing differences which are evident only in the written form, at the expense of time that could and should be spent on learning to use these words meaningfully. Our eighth graders learn about pre-verbal frequency expressions, which are, incidentally, quite often neither pre-verbal nor expressions of frequency. (We have here obviously a case of over-simplification.)

In this connection, I would like to mention an incident — not in a classroom teaching situation — which triggered off this letter. I was visiting a school in the company of a British visitor, for whose benefit the headmaster (Israeli) talked to us in English. In the course of the visit he introduced one of the staff, saying "This is the teacher of the 6th Grade; she is almost my wife" (sic). When I told this to a relative of mine (who is *always* — sorry, *also* my [Hebrew-speaking] husband), he chuckled, thinking that "almost" was synonymous with "mostly".

It would be entertaining to consider some of the varied speech acts that could be produced simply by substituting a few random pre-verbals, without, of course, violating the rules of grammar. What about

"She is occasionally my wife" ?
 seldom ?
 usually ?
 hardly ?
 probably ?

It makes you think

Hana Horowitz, Beersheba

PLAYING BOGGLE

Sir,

I have been playing "Boggle" and since it has instructional and educational possibilities and also was enjoyed by everybody involved, I would like to share my experience with my fellow-teachers.

"Boggle" is actually a plastic box containing 16 cubes, on each side of which there is a letter of the alphabet (obviously most letters appear more than once). The box is shaken up and the cubes are allowed to settle into 16 molds, with 16 letters facing the players. For example, the letters may fall into place in this way :

A	R	O	I
G	T	I	D
F	P	S	L
QU	D	O	I

The pupils are asked to form words using any consecutive letters, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. The player may come back to a letter twice but may not dwell on one letter twice. The time is limited by agreement (originally about three minutes). The score can be determined according to the level of the class. With elementary or low-level classes two-letter words may be accepted. Higher classes should start from three-letter or four-letter words: one point for two-letter words, two points for three-letter words, etc., provided that other players do not have the same word on their list. The teacher calls upon the pupils to call out the words they have listed and writes them on the blackboard. Pupils are asked to discard those of their words that have been listed by other pupils, and score only the others. Thus, only the more sophisticated words receive the score but it is surprising how frequently it happens that the simplest words

are not on the list of the more ambitious pupils, which increases the chances of the weaker ones.

A sample solution for the above game would be: art, tar, lisp, lost, far, dip(s), dirt, pit(s), post, raft, riot, slid, soil, sold, spit, spoil, tips, trio, trip, etc., etc.

A boggle game brought to class, hour-glass and all, provides of course the most vivid, authentic and motivating way of presentation, but the inventive teacher can find a variety of other ways for choosing the letters.

The teacher prepares the 16-square sketch on the blackboard and if she has no boggle game for inspiration she can use suggestions from the pupils or letters picked at random from a text, and fill them into the squares. The game can of course be manipulated to fit a special purpose, to include the possibility to make up recently acquired words, problematic spelling (gh, ough, ei). It can be played in groups or by single students. The number of participants is unlimited. It can be given in class or assigned as fun-homework.

To sum up the advantages of the game:

- i. It can be adjusted to any level.
- ii. It can be played by any number of participants.
- iii. It is ideal for using those extra five minutes advantageously.
- iv. Fun activity for last lesson of term, before Purim, etc.
- v. If properly exploited it reinforces correct spelling (penalize wrong spelling by the loss of one point).
- vi. Provides the possibility for acquisition of new vocabulary (the better students and the teacher, who plays along with the class without scoring, provide the more sophisticated vocabulary).
- vii. The time-limit introduces tempo into the class, encourages quick thinking and reaction and prevents the game from becoming boring.
- viii. Encourages divergent thinking in its most elementary sense, as pupils are encouraged to work in more than one, the conventional, direction.

Ilana Kornblueth, Gimnasia Rehavia, Jerusalem

BEGINNING AGE FOR ENGLISH

Sir,

The statement of opposition to teaching English in Grades 2 and 3 quoted in the ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNAL (ISRAEL), Number 25, July 1981, page 8, misinterprets the state of research into the question of the age of beginning foreign language instruction. Research does not in fact support the claim that there is no long-term advantage to be gained from beginning language learning early. What has been shown is that older learners have an initial

advantage over younger ; however, all things being equal, there continues to be evidence of a long-term advantage for an early start. Nor is there a clear distinction, as claimed in the statement, between school and natural conditions ; older children seem to have the same short-term advantage in both of these situations, whether they are learning foreign or second languages. But the long-term results continue to favour an early start.

What can reasonably be claimed is that there are types of foreign language instruction that are unsuitable for young children ; similarly, there are unsuitable types of mother-tongue, music, nature study, or physical education teaching. In other words, the pedagogical question is not really when to start foreign language teaching, but how to do it best. In most cases, the question of when to start is a political rather than a pedagogical issue. One notes the paradoxical effect of decisions like this and the parallel reduction of Bagrut points for English : through actions like these, the Ministry risks increasing the scarcity value and social prestige of English. By resisting parental pressure, then, it tends to assure the opposite of its aims.

*Bernard Spolsky, Professor, Department of English,
Bar-Ilan University*

(Editor's Note : The item referred to [the Ministry decision not to allow teaching English before Grade Four] was motivated, as Professor Spolsky indicates, primarily by considerations of general educational policy [i.e. the priority of other subjects in the curriculum], the specific Foreign Language reference being that "no long-term advantage is gained from the very early beginning... pupils who begin later will soon catch up...". I would query, however, his interpretation of the research. One very recently-received report is the "Final Report" of the UNESCO "meeting of experts" on teaching foreign languages (rapporteurs Mr. D. Girard from France and Mr. E. Roulet from Switzerland), document ED. 75/CONF.606/25, Paris 1976), which states that "sufficient definitive data are not yet available to show whether the early teaching of languages makes for more rapid attainment of the aims in view, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that older children learn more quickly and retain their knowledge better than younger children and that, therefore, IF A LATER START IS MADE, THEY MAY ACHIEVE THE SAME RESULTS AS WHEN THEY BEGIN AT AN EALY AGE". Discussion of the research in McLaughlin's "Second-Language Acquisition in Childhood" also tends to support the interpretation that no long-term advantage is gained by beginning foreign-language learning under school conditions at an early age. Indeed, compared to most other countries, Israel already begins foreign language instruction at an early age : most other countries only begin the subject in secondary school.

With regard to the "Bagrut points", Professor Spolsky's opinions clearly do not accord with those of the English Committee of the Ministry of Education or the Pedagogical Secretariat of the Ministry. The new format under no circumstances involves any kind of reduction in the quality or quantity of the curriculum; the literature component becomes an internal syllabus and examination, thereby making the choice of texts autonomous and so more relevant to any given school population, while the external examination as a test solely of language proficiency emphasises and indeed increases the commitment to teaching English as a means of international communication.)

AN ENGLISH DRAMA PROJECT IN TIBERIAS

Sir,

Last January marked the beginning of a unique living and learning experience for us in the development town of Tiberias.

We, my husband Martin and I, chose to volunteer in Tiberias because we were offered the opportunity (together with two other volunteers) to implement a drama programme in the primary school system, utilizing English.

Forty-five children (sixth, seventh and eighth grades), were chosen from six different schools on the basis of their oral and reading comprehension of English, their flair for acting, and enthusiasm for the project.

Martin wrote an original script, complete with songs, based on the television and movie character Superman, whom the children were already familiar with. The script was written to incorporate structures being learned in the classroom, and an easy vocabulary level.

The purpose of the play was to create a living English experience for the students. Besides teaching the text of the play and its meaning, all direction in acting and choreography was given in English. All the dances were choreographed in order to have the children's movements emphasize the lyrics sung. Improvements in English were not achieved by the strict memorization of lines, but in discussion with the children about character portrayal and set design. The children were involved in all aspects of the production as a whole, from making costumes to designing a programme.

"Superman" was performed at the end of the school year for the children of Tiberias and a special performance was also given for the parents and community. The English drama programme was so well received that it continued this year, with our first production, "The Wizard of Oz", played at Chanukkah. This was very successfully performed, and we are presently in rehearsal for the musical "Grease".

Barbara King, Tiberias

DICTIONARY SKILLS

Sir,

As you may recall, I published a book of dictionary drills, entitled "Use Your Dictionary", in 1971. Over the years, mainly as a result of using the material in my classes, I jotted down notes and ideas for a possible future revision. However, I learned that Oxford University Press was about to publish their own workbook, and I assumed that there would no longer be any justification for me to proceed on a revision of my own work. I therefore suggested that my publisher refrain from reprinting the original text, which had in the meanwhile gone through three printings. The Oxford workbook has since appeared, under the name "Use Your Dictionary" (a rather strange 'coincidence' in view of the fact that my book had been sent to them for possible co-production), but I feel that it is totally inadequate and that there is still room for a major revision of my original workbook. I am therefore planning to go ahead, with my publisher's blessings.

I would be most indebted to your readers for any criticism and comments they might have re my original "Use Your Dictionary", and for any suggestions, material or ideas which they would like to see incorporated in a revision, bearing in mind that it should serve the needs of secondary school students and of University proficiency pre-advanced classes.

All suggestions will be welcome at any time during the coming academic year, but most particularly during the coming six months.

Menachem Bloch, Bar-Ilan University

BEIT BERL'S "ENGLISH ROOM"

Sir,

As a recently-qualified teacher of English I have been looking for more ideas and aids in teaching. Luckily, I discovered the "English Room" in Beit Berl. Since other teachers as well as I found it very helpful, I would like to recommend it to others. This "English Room" (Pedagogical Center) in the Beit Berl Teachers' College, Kfar Saba presents a variety of activities and games and provides many new and productive ideas. The "English Room" is divided into different corners. Each corner centers around a certain topic, for instance "Purim" (stories, games, worksheets, songs, pictures, etc.). Other corners focus on Pop Music, Wh-Questions, etc. I would advise everyone to go and have a look at it and see the ready-made material which is available (open from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.).

Nurit Basry, Kiriath Hinech (Municipal Secondary Zayin), Jaffa

TEACHING WOUNDED SOLDIERS

Dear Colleagues,

A volunteer undertaking has been set up throughout Israel — **OPERATION ENGLISH** — which will enable our wounded soldiers in the various hospitals and rest homes to carry on their English studies on all levels including conversation, preparation for matriculation, as well as university entrance examinations.

We are recruiting a staff of qualified English teachers who will volunteer to give lessons to the soldiers during their period of convalescence and rehabilitation. All materials at all levels have been prepared and will be supplied. We need a responsible group which will be reliable and steadfast in their work.

If you are interested and can give time to this vital project, kindly fill out and return the form below as promptly as possible. We hope that "Operation English" will meet with your wholehearted cooperation.

Urgently yours,

Miriam Flachs (Coordinator), "Operation English"

P.O. Box 21575, 61 214 Tel Aviv

Telephone : 03-442809, 03-694735

NAME :

ADDRESS : POSTAL CODE :

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MY YOUNG POETS

יתרונות בהוראת שירים, גם שירי עם ושירי "פופ", בכיתה; עידוד לתלמידים בחיבור שירה לפי המודל של שיר "פופ". דוגמאות.

NEWS FROM THE INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION CENTRE

הצעות כיצד להורות את הסידרה לכיתה ו', במצב של צמצום שעות ההוראה. דו"ח על הקורס החדש לכיתות ו"א ותוכניות לעתיד.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

מכתבים למערכת על גיסוי בהוראת הקריאה והשיחה בבית ספר מקיף בקרית מלאכי, קורס קיץ לתלמידים טעוני טיפוח באוניברסיטת בר-אילן, על הצורך להדגיש את אוצר המלים בלימודים כנגד הדקדוק, משחק חדש, הגיל הרצוי בהתחלת לימוד השפה, פרויקט הדרמה בטבריה, מיומנויות המילון, מכללת בית ברל. הוראת אנגלית לחיילים פצועים בבתי החולים.

עלון למורים לאנגלית, מס' 27, תשרי תשמ"ג, ספטמבר 1982

תמצית המאמרים שמופיעים בגליון זה:

INFORMATION FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

בחינות הבגרות במתכונת החדשה (קיץ תשמ"ג) — בחינה חיצונית במיומנויות לשון; בחינות הסמכה למורים לא-מוסמכים בבתי-הספר העלייסודיים, במקצוע "דרכי הוראת אנגלית"; תואר מ.א. בהוראת אנגלית כשפה זרה באוניברסיטת תל אביב; ועידת האגודה למורים לאנגלית; ספרי לימוד חדשים; פירסומים חדשים למורים; עתונים באנגלית מפרשטת.

TRANSLATION AS A SKILL FOR TEACHING AND TESTING

הצעה ללמד את התירגום (מאנגלית לעברית או לערבית) כמיומנות נפרדת (נוסף על המיומנויות האחרות — הבנת הנשמע, הבנת הנקרא, הבעה בעל פה והבעה בכתב), וכמה תגובות בעד ונגד. המורים מוזמנים להביע את דעתם בנושא.

EFFICIENCY IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

היעילות בהוראה, דהיינו השגת המקסימום בהישגים במינימום המאמץ והזמן, חשובה על ידיעות המורה במתודיקה וכו'. לפעמים, אין לדרך ההוראה משמעות בהצלחת התלמידים. על המורה להחליט על מטרות הקורס בהתאם לתנאי הלימוד.

PREPARING AN ALBUM AS A CLASS PROJECT

פרוייקט בבית ספר תיכון עירוני הרצליה בכיתות ט', להכין אלבום באנגלית ולהפיצו בין בתי הספר בחו"ל, כחלק מפעולות בית הספר בקידום יחסים בינלאומיים. פעולות אחרות בתחום הזה הן משלחות לחו"ל והתכתבות.

TESTING ORAL PROFICIENCY

הצעה לשפר את הבחינה בהבעה בעל פה בבחינות הבגרות, במבנה ובמהימנות ההערכה היא שיחה מוקלטת וקביעת קנה מידה מוסכמים לציונים השונים (חמשה במקום עשרה). הצעה למחקר ולניסוי.

PROPOSAL FOR THE CURRICULUM FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

הצעה לתכנית לימודים להוראת אנגלית לתלמידים מחוננים, כסיכום ישיבת הוועדה להוראת אנגלית לתלמידים מחוננים מטעם המרכז לתכניות לימודים במשרד החינוך התרבות. מטרות הלימודים, המתודולוגיה המוצעת, ופריטי תכנית הלימודים לכיתות גיל שונות.

USING DRAMA TO TEACH ENGLISH

שלשה מאמרים על השימוש בדרמה בלימודי אנגלית בבית הספר התיכון בירושלים, בהכנת מחזות מאולטרים בטבריה, והפרספקטיבה הפסיכולוגוויסטית.

משרד החינוך והתרבות
המזכירות הפדגוגית - הפיקוח על הוראת האנגלית

עלון למורים לאנגלית

מספר 27
תשרי תשמ"ג, ספטמבר 1982